
THE THIRD AND LAST
VOLUME
OF THE
Farwell Sermons,

Preached by some *London* and *Countray*
Ministers.

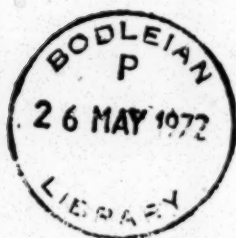
VIZ.

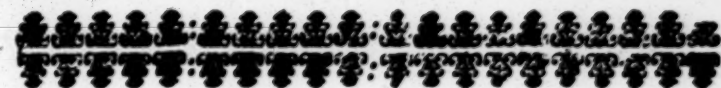
Mr. <i>Craddock</i>	at S. Sepulchres.
Mr. <i>Pleedger</i>	at S. Tantlines.
Mr. <i>Bull</i>	at Newington.
Mr. <i>Collins</i>	Morning Lecture at S. Tantlines.

Together with Dr. *Hortons* Sermon at
Mr. *Naltons* Funerall.

Faithfully Collected and Printed by the
best Copies.

London, Printed in the year, 1663.





The Preface to the
CHRISTIAN
Reader.

Reader,



It is no small joy to those who have taken pains in this work of publishing the Farwell Sermons, that the former two Volumns, have been so kindly accepted, which were lately published under this title, viz. The Farwell Sermons of the late London Ministers, Preached August 17. 1662. By,

*Mr. Calamy.
Dr. Manton.
Mr. Caryl.
Mr. Case.
Mr. Jenkins.
Mr. Baxter.*

*Dr. Jacomb.
Dr. Bates.
Mr. Watson.
Mr. Lye.
Mr. Mede, and
Mr. Ash's funeral Ser.*

The Preface.

And also that the second Volume preached
by,

Dr. Seaman.

Mr. Beermans.

Mr. Venning.

Mr. Calamys Preached

Mr. Brook.

Mr. Newcomen, of Esse.

28. December, 1662

Which kind acceptance they have found amongst the People of God, both in City and Countrey, hath encouraged them to finish and compleat the Work by adding this one Volume more which they Intitle the Third and Last Volume. It is the third in order, and they do resolve it shall be the Last, having now (as they hope) so far compleated the Work that there are few or none that are eminent, but they are taken in, and as we said of those so we may say of these :- they are they are the words of dying men, who count it there life to do there Masters work, we are bold to say, here is no design, but against sin, no Plot, but against Hells policy, no Treason, but to seize upon the Treasury of Heaven and to obtain a glorious Crown there, and seeing it hath pleased almighty God, for our sin to call (as it were) so many labourours out of the harvest as to there publick Ministries,

The Preface.

series, let every one in his close labor lay this to heart, for surely England sins are very great and heinous, that have sinned God and man against us, our teachers are layed aside by men, and some are called away from us by God, for as in the first Volumn thou hast the Funeral of one: so this Third in its close, must have a death head: The Righteous are taken away, but who layeth it to heart.

We might say much, as to the excellency of these following Sermons, they do breath forth the holyness and plainness of the Preachers spirits, who were very laborious and prosperous in the work of the Ministry, both by there Books and Preaching, the names and memories of the judicious and learned Authors of these Sermons are so precious to us for their great worths and eminent abilities, that we cannot but rejoyce at the publication of these their labours, that are so profitable, and that these are such, we are confidently assured. If thou question the truth of this, come and see, thou shalt find much cause to encrease thy tears in the remembrance of those faithful Laborers, that sin hath deprived England of. We commend them therefore to thy perusal and the blessing

The Preface.

*sing of the Lords Grace, if thou finds any
Errata in word or phrase or any thing that
seem imperfect, impute it not to the reverent
and learned dispencers, but to the transcri-
bers hereof, so we commend thee to God.*

Farewell.



Mr. Cradecots Far- vvel Sermon.

Phil. 4: latter part of vers. 9.

— *And heard, and seen in me do,
and the God of peace shall be
with you.*



From this Verse we may observe
three Doctrines.

*That the Peoples eyes must be
taught by the Ministers holi-
ness of life, as well as their
ers by the Ministers soundness of Doctrine.*

Doct. 2.

The great Benefit of

Paul did not teach one thing and practice another ; he practised as he preached , and he both practised and preached the fore-mentioned Duties in the Verse before the Text. And to this end the Lord appointed a Ministry to be perpetuated through all ages of the World : And it is the Lords appointment that peoples ears should be taught with sound doctrine, to the matter and manner of it ; and it is the Lords appointment that the peoples eyes should be taught by the Ministers holiness of life, as well as their ears by their soundness in Doctrine ; and this is necessary for the Minister himself, and necessary for the people : No marvel then that a faithful Ministry is the But of the Devils malice, of his craft and cruelty, and that the Devil hath in all Ages attempted and endeavoured utterly to overthrow the Ministry, or to poyson and fly-blow it shamefully, & this is the method whereby Satan hath endeavoured to fly-blow the Ministry. Why then see the folly and madness of those people who affect or cry up those Ministers who do not teach their people with sound Doctrine, or a holy life ; and whether there be not such Ministers which do not teach their peoples ears with soundness of Doctrine , or their eyes with a holy life ? and whether there be not such people as do cry up such Ministers ? and whether or no such people are not guilty of spiritual folly and madness ? judge ye.

Doct.

Doct. 2. A Ministers soundness in Doctrine and holiness of life and conversation, doth lay a very great obligation on a people to a due conscientious practice of every commanded dutie. The Apostle, we see, maketh his Preaching and Practice an argument to excite the *Philippians* to the fore-mentioned commanded duties, as is in the Text, and the verse before the Text.

As first of all, the Appellations and Titles given in Scripture to such Ministers whose Doctrine is sound, and whose Lives and Conversations are exemplarily holy.

They are called, 1. *The Salt of the Earth*, as *Matth. 5. 13.* read that, saith Christ to those great Teachers of the Gospel, and Dispensers of his Oracles, and in them to their Successors. Salt hath two things in it, namely, Sharpness and Savouriness; and thus Ministers, first must rebuke sharply, that people may be sown in the Faith, as *Paul* enjoyns *Titus*, as in the 1. of *Titus* and 13. ver. And secondly, Ministers must speak savoury things to every person, and to every palat, that their people may be savoury both in heart and life; but to be as unsavoury as stinking carion in the nostrils of the Almighty God, under such a savoury and seasoning Ministry, this is woeful. It is the nature of salt to cause barrenness where it seasoneth not; therefore we read of *Abimelech* in *Judges 9. ver. 45.* that he sowed the City with salt: So that people

The great Benefit of

who live under a sharp and savoury Ministry, and are not seasoned therewith, and preserved from putrefaction in their sin and corruption thereby, their case is very dangerous.

2. They are called again *the Light of the World*, in *Matth. 5. 14.* read that. As for their Doctrine, *the Salt of the Earth*; so for their Lives, *the Light of the World*; and they must therefore lead convincing lives, as *John 5. 35.* read that; it is there said of *John the Baptist*, our blessed Lord and Saviour gives him this commendatory Character, or Testimonial, *That he was a burning and a shining light*, burning in himself, and shining to others: Or as it was said of *Basil*, *Thundring in his Doctrine, and lightning in his Life and Conversation.* Now if good Ministers be the light of the world, then hence we may infer,

2. Inference.

1. That without a godly faithful Ministry the world lieth in darkness, ignorance, error, sin and misery. It is said of *Galilee*, in *Matth. 4. 16.* *That the people who sate in darkness, saw great light*, read that. Why, had they not Priests and Levites? I answer, they had indeed sorry Priests, but they had not a faithful Ministry; and therefore the Evangelist tells them *they sate in darkness, yea, in the region and shadow of death*, notwithstanding the sorry sottish Priests they had: But when they had a faithful Ministry, they are said to see a great Light. Again, If good Ministers be
the

the light of the world, then we may draw this Corallary, That to be offended at the light of a faithful and powerful Ministry, argues and speaks a very sinful and wretched frame of heart. Nothing is so excellent, but some will be displeased at it and with it, as *Eccles. 11. 7.* Even the light it self we know is offensive to fore eyes; and thus the burning and shining light of a godly and faithful Ministry is offensive and terrible to some; but who are they? fore diseased souls, the Lord knows. The Ark of God, which was the monument of his presence, whom did it smite with Emrods but the *Philistins*? What then, is the Ale-bench more easie to thee then thy pew is to thee in this place? then a Conscience, Soul-searching Sermon? what, art thou offended at a powerful faithful Ministry? Oh fearful plague-tokens!

3. To do all that man can do to put out the Light, this is worse. It is the most horrid, hellish plot that can be assigned or named; and of this I am sure the Church of *Rome* cannot plead not guilty, which like the Scribes and Pharisees, take away from the people the key of knowledge, and shut up the Kingdome of Heaven against men. How terribly doth our blessed Lord thunder-strike those stupid Pharisees for this, *Matth. 23. 13.* And as did the Pharisees, so did the Papists: For 1. Heretofore they made it a mortal sin to read Gods Word. 2. Afterwards, they clogged the

The great Benefit of

liberty they granted with such cautions and restrictions, as that very few escaped of those that were within the reach of the Inquisition.

3. Those clogs contented not, but now it is thought fit utterly to deny liberty, and can there be a more horrible hellish plot assigned then this, to take from people their knowledge of Salvation? And thus the Church of *Rome*, whether they have Church-snuffers or not, to be sure they have Church-extinguishers, and various means to put out the light. Oh fearful is this! as in *John* 3. 19, 20. *That is the reason men hate the Light, because their deeds are evil.*

Again, If good Ministers be the Light of the world, then hence may we draw this Conclusion, That it concerns people very neerly to believe in the light, and to walk in the light, and to work while the light lasteth, as our blessed Saviour exhorteth in *John* 12. 35, 36. read that. God sets up his Ministers as Lights, as Candles on the candlesticks of his Church, to awaken men, and to light men unto eternal life: And ought not people to pray hard, and to work hard while the light lasteth? God removes many times the candle and candlestick, and makes the Sun to go down at noon-day, as *Amos* 8. 9. so darkens the Earth at clear day. Good Ministers they are called the light of the world, and they are called

3. Stars, as in *Revel.* 3. 1. And who are meant

meant by the seven Stars? *Rev. 1. ult.* they are the Angels, that is, the Ministers of the seven Churches. Now the Stars are said to affect those inferiour bodies, 1. By their influence. And thus godly and faithful Ministers, by the influence of their lips they feed many with the bread of life. 2. By their regular motives of their lives they confirm many. 3. By the light of both they confirm many: One while their imployment is to instruct poor souls, and so they are like Stars shining in a dark winter-night; another while they are to converse in their courses, *Judg. 5. 20.* Now to enjoy and live under the Ministry of such Stars, and yet to walk in darkness, and to have fellowship with the works of darkness, to remain unconvinc'd, unconverted, unhumbl'd, unmortified, unfruitful, this is woful, this is a very lamentable state.

4. They are called the Lords Messengers and Embassadors, *Mal. 2. 7.* and the Ministers of the Gospel; for indeed the Ministers of the New Testament they are no where called Priests, they are called Embassadors for Christ, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* Godly, faithful Ministers are the Lord Messengers and Embassadors in matters concerning the Soul, the precious, immortal, never-dying soul of man, not in the matters of this life, but for the soul. Now this is no mean imployment to treat with God for the soul.

5. They are called the Lords Husbandmen.

The great Benefit of

Gods Church is his husbandry, 1 Cor. 3. 9. and Ministers are Gods husbandmen: naturally we are like a barren wilderness; now the Lord sends his husbandmen to those barren wildernesses, to make it a fruitful Paradise: Now for Gods husbandmen to, plow, sow, and harrow, and yet no fruit, no crop, *Isa.* 5. 6. When Gods Vineyard brought forth no fruit, *I will take away all their rainy clouds,* saith God; you shall have clouds, but you shall have clouds without rain; you shall have Ministers still, but such as shall never do your souls any good.

Well, you see the Titles given to them in Scripture: They are called the Salt of the Earth, and the Light of the World, and Stars, and the Lords Messengers and Embassadors, and Husbandmen; all which doth import a very great obligation lying on a people who live under such a Minister, and who live under and practice every commanded duty.

1. Inference.

2. Dangerous and fearful is the estate of those who have enjoyed and lived under, and have not been wrought upon by such a Ministry: And this will appear if we consider,
1. How fearful a sentence the Lord Jesus Christ hath given to those that live under, but despise and profit not by the Ministry of his faithful Servants, *Mat.* 10. 14, 15. And do not think that Christ said this touching the Ministry of the Apostles onely, certainly the
Lord

Lord Christ would have it to be understood of the Ministry of all his faithful servants, whom he sendeth to teach his people, *John* 13. 20. whomsoever he sends; and so, *He that despiseth whomever I send, despiseth me.* Then is the message of the Lords faithful messengers received aright, when people do not onely hear it, but receive it, and bring forth fruit, as our blessed Lord speaks of good hearers, *Mark* 4. 20. Those are they that hear and receive the fruits sown in good ground: And thus our blessed Lord expounds himself, *Matth.* 11. 24. he telleth us there that they of *Capernaum* shall be in a worse case then they of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*; and why? because they repented not at Christs Sermons and Miracles; they were not to be seen in their lives, notwithstanding Christs Ministry, notwithstanding Christs Preaching and his miracles among them, they did not amend their hearts and wayes: Oh how fearful a sentence hath our Lord Jesus Christ denounced against such!

2. If a people be not wrought upon by such a Ministry, what hope can such a people have that any thing shall do their souls any good? for is not the Ministry of Gods faithful Servants the power of God to Salvation, and the ministration of the Spirit, *2 Cor.* 3. 8. That is that Ministry whereby the Spirit of grace and holiness is infused into the hearts of the Fathers chosen ones in Christ Jesus.

The great Benefit of

mus. The Poet speaks of excellent Musicians, who by the power of their musick made stones to leap into a wall. A godly, faithful Ministry hath done more, it hath taken the stone out of mans heart, and hath given them new hearts; it hath made all the commandments of God easie to many a poor soul, because it loves its Father, its Redeemer and Comforter. There is a kind of obedience in a godly faithful Minister; and if this will not do, nothing will, as in *Luke 16. 31.*

3. Is not the cause of the non-proficiency of such a people under such a ministry in themselves? Oh men do hinder the fruit of the Word in their own souls, the powerful operation and working of the Word on their own souls! The Lord prophesies that sentence on the *Jewes*, *Matth. 13. 14.* he lays all the blame on themselves, and assigns their own sins, and the reason and cause of it, as in verse 13. And thus our blessed Saviour expounds the parable of the Sower, shewing how many that hear the Word are never the better for it; and he layeth the blame on themselves, as in *Luke 8. 14.* what then, hast thou not profited under the ministry of the Lords faithful servants? Oh lay the blame on thy self.

4. Consider, hath not the Lord himself a hand in the proficiency or non-proficiency under such a ministry; surely the Lord hath a chief hand in making the ministry of his servants

a Godly Ministry.

II

vants fruitful or not fruitful to them that enjoy it: Now to enjoy and not enjoy, is it not a fearful sign that ye are not of God, as *John* 8. 47. is it not a signe that thou art not of Gods Elect, at least of Regeneration? But you will say, did not the *Jewes* hear Gods Word? Yes, they did, with their bodily ears, but they heard it not with faith, submission, and fruitfulness, and therefore our blessed Saviour tells them, they were not of God, that is, they were at least in an unregenerate, if not in a reprobate condition: And so *John* 10. 26. *Ye are those goats (saith Christ) that must stand at my left hand in that great day; and then unbelievers shall reflect on themselves, not on Christs Ministry by the mouths of his Servants.*

But if any should say, What then, will you say that all of us are reprobates that are not wrought on by your Ministry?

I say not so; for that seed which hath been sown on you, may do your souls good hereafter, though it hath done them little or no good as yet.

But secondly, this I may boldly say, That if any of you die in your present state, unconverted, unregenerate, you will carry with you to your grave as fearful marks of reprobation, as any we can finde in the whole Book of God. *John* Baptist compares the ministry of the Gospel to a Fan, in *Matth.* 3. 12. When the Lord Jesus maketh use of the ministry of his

The great Benefit of

his faithful servants among the people, when he maketh use of those fans, it will appear who among them are wheat, and shall be gathered into the Lords Garner; and who among them are chaff, and shall be cast into the fire. And now whether the present state that you have lived under, and are not yet wrought upon by a faithful Ministrie, be not very dangerous, judge ye. And so much may suffice for the Doctrinal part.

If it be so then, *That a Ministers soundness in Doctrine, and holiness of life and conversation, doth lay a great obligation on a people conscienciously and duly to practice every commanded duty;* Then first of all, the first Use we shall make of this Doctrine shall be by way of Trial and Examination, and that in two particulars.

1. Branch
of the Use
of Trial.

First, Whether you in this Parish, in this place, you here before the Lord do make conscience of the due practice of every commanded duty.

Secondly, Whether the Ministry you have enjoyed and lived under, doth not lay a great obligation on you so to do?

For the first of these, *Whether you here before the Lord do make conscience of the due practice of every commanded duty in obedience to Almighty God, you may try your selves by these three excellent ingredients.*

First,

First, *Universality*, Canst thou in the witness of thy conscience say, that through grace thou dost every, as well as any part of the Lords revealed Will so far as thou knowest it?

2. *Uniformity*; Dost thou do *all* without prejudice or partiality?

3. *Ubiquity*; Art thou the same at home as abroad, in thy closet as well as in the congregation? and dost thou mind inward and secret, as well as open and outward holiness? What saith conscience to this?

As first, Hath commanded duties a Throne in your own souls and conscience. Secondly, Have they a throne in thy Family.

First, Have commanded duties a throne in your own souls and consciences? Is your hearts fully possessed with the power of those divine and heavenly Truths, which you have often heard, which hath been again and again inculcated upon you as it was upon the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thess.* 1.5. their carnal principles were confuted, their passion moderated, their lusts mortified, their self-ends confounded; are yours so? Have commanded duties a throne in your souls and consciences,? Oh that all your consciences could give a satisfying answer to this Query.

Secondly, Have commanded duties a throne in your Families; do you make conscience of

First,

of Family duties ; are your houses *Bethels* , that is houses of God , houses of prayer , are they habitations of Holiness and Righteousness ? do you make conscience of relative as well as of personal duties ? Oh that all your consciences could give a satisfying answer to this Query !

2 Branch of
of the Use
of Trial.

But now the second Branch of this Use of Trial and Examination is this, Whether the Ministry you have enjoyed and lived under, doth not lay a very great obligation on you to put in execution every commanded dutie, as *Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8*, that is, the Word of Faith we Preach ; read that place : And may not we take up that with some variation, and say, You have heard of the disease, the miserie, and remedie. When the great God shall arraign thee at the great and fearful Day, and shall say thus, Thou rebellious wretch, why didst thou not forsake thy evil waies, thy drunkenness, thy tipling, thy covetousness, thy snuffing at puritie, thy inveterate heart and spirit against my holy way and Ministers ? why didst thou not forsake thy evil waies ? wilt thou be able to say, Lord, I lived under 1. A soul-betraying, non-resident Minister, one that made it his business to fleece indeed, not to feed the flock : or 2. Under a soul-poisoning Innovator ; or 3. Under a soul-pining dry nurse ; or 4. Under a soul-misguiding guide ; or 5. Under a

ligio
soul

soul-unsetling temporizer ; or 6. Under a soul-destroying dis-countenancer.

1. Canst thou say that thou livest under a soul-betraying, non-resident Minister, one that made it his business to fleece, and not to feed the flock ? one that looked after the wool and fat of the flock ; the fleece, but never minded the flock, but non-residence hath been hitherto decried, as that as breeds a Minister idle and erroneous, or licentious ? but wilt thou be able to say, Lord, I lived under such a Minister, that was a soul-betraying Minister, one that was greedy of Livings, and had perhaps two, or three, or four, but so bad a man, that the worst was too good for him ? or wilt thou be able to plead, or canst thou say,

2. Lord, I lived under a soul-poysoning Innovator, one that was for formalitie more then reality of true worship ; one that preached such Doctrine as did not season, but poison and destroy the souls of his hearers ; such are Romish Teachers, Jesuits, Priests, and Seminaries, who so affect the outward pomp, as they neglect the inward power of it ? Wilt thou be able to say, Lord, I lived under the Ministry of such a one, who was more zealous for the formalitie of thy worship, then the reality ; more zealous for those things that will not endure the trial of the Lords day of appearance, then for the substance of Religion : Or

3. Canst

3. Canst thou plead that thou livedst under a soul-pining dry Nurse, one that did not, or could not feed us with the sincere milk of thy Word, one from whom thou never heardst a soul-solid, a soul-working Sermon all thy life? I appeal to your Consciences, have you not heard often of your miseries, and Gods mercie, and Christs merits? Have you not heard often of the necessitie of a holy life? Oh the convictions, informations, exhortations, perswasions, directions, you have enjoyed and lived under! Hath not thy state by nature been ripped up, and the Anatomie, (not of the Councel of Trent) but of Gods Book, been shewed to thee? What shall I say, hath not Hell and Damnation to all rebellious, and Heaven and Salvation to all true penitent souls, been preached to you?

4. Or canst thou say that thou livedst under a soul-misguiding guide, as 1. A blind Seer, a blind Watchman, a blind Leader of the blind, one who knew not Heavens way? Canst thou say thou livedst under such a creature that is not to be found in Christs Catalogue, an Idol-preacher, as in *Psalme* 135. 15, 16, 17. verses, read that. Or 2. If not ignorant, yet one so vicious, that he pulled down more with his foul hands, then he built up with his fair tongue? Canst thou say thou livedst under one, who by his conversation gave his Doctrine the lye? Wilt thou be able to plead thus at the great day? or wilt thou be able to say

5. That

5. That thou hast lived under a soul-un-
fetting Temporizer. What would he not do
rather than he would lose his Living? which
made me think Religion to be but a fancie.
Wilt thou be able to say at the great Day,
Lord, it was my sad lot and portion to live
under the Ministry of such a one, who tuned
his Fiddle to the times of every one? I, or
lastly,

Wilt thou be able to say thou livedst under
a soul-destroying, dis-countenancer of all
purity and holiness? one (perhaps) though
no dunce, or drunkard, yet a profane scot-
ter, one that preached holiness out of his
Pulpit, and Parish, and House, and the like.

But first of all, we can through grace ap-
peal in this case both to the Lord and to your
selves, that it hath not been so with you.

2. Consider how unexcusable you will be,
if you live and die in your ignorance, impé-
nitencie, and unbelief.

1. Consider, we can in this case appeal both
to the Lord and to your selves. 1. To the
Lord: we are able with an humble boldness
to appeal to him, and say, Lord, thou know-
est we have given this people warning, *Ezek.*
3. 18. Now blessed be the Lord, we can hum-
bly appeal to his Majestie, Oh Lord, thou
knowest we have warned the wicked to turn

C

from

The great Benefit of

from his wicked way, and the profane from his profaneness, and the superstitious from his superstition, and the schismatical from his schism, and the formal from his formalitie, and the civil honest man from resting in his moralitie. Oh blessed be thy name, we have endeavoured to take off this people from all their sandy; quagmoiry foundations! Lord, thou knowest our prayers for them. And so

2. To appeal to you: And this was a very great comfort to St. *Paul*, that he could appeal to the people themselves, as *Acts* 20. 26, 27. This was a great comfort to him; and blessed be the God of Grace, it is a great comfort to us, that we can take you to record, that we are pure from your blood; we have not ceased to declare all that the Father hath shewn to us; we have not been affrighted by any man, or mens frowns, nor debauched to conceal any part thereof by any mans smiles.

2. Consider how *inexcusable* you will be, if you live and die in your ignorance, impenitency, and unbelief, *Ezek.* 3. 10. Observe it, if you miscarry for Eternitie, the blood of your souls will not be charged on us; nay, it will be on your own heads: And therefore the Apostle *Paul*, when he preached Christ to the *Jews*, and they opposed and blasphemed, their blood was upon their own heads, as *Acts* 18. 5, 6. Oh consider

der it ! if your Ministers have been faithful, they are clear, and free, and guiltless ; the Lord will never charge the blood of souls on them. Consider it therefore ; how speechless will you be at the great day, if you live and die in your sins ? may not the Lord say of this place, as he did of *Capernaum*, *Mat.* 11. 23. for thou hast enjoyed the Ministry of many of my servants : Dare any of you meet us in the day of judgement, under whose Ministry you have lived in an unregenerate estate, and say that you have lived under a soul-betraying, non-resident one ; or under a soul-poysoning Innovator ; or a soul-pining dry-nurse ; or a soul-misguiding guide ; or a soul-unsettled Temporizer ; or a soul-destroying dis-countenancer, in an unregenerate estate ? The Lord will then make you to know what it was to have a faithful Labourer among you, as *Exek.* 33. 33. Then, when you shall be convinced in your own Consciences, you shall then say, you heard all those things, and we cannot say we were unwarned, either in sin or danger ; we cannot say we were untaught our dutie either to God or man ; we had precept on precept, but we slighted all warning, and exhortation, and direction, therefore now are lost and undone everlastingly. So much may serve for the first Use.

The second Use is a use of Direction, ^{2 Use of} which ^{Direction.}

The great Benefit of

which will fall into many very suitable and practical particulars, whereto I do beseech you to hearken unto, as the words of a dying man do commonly take the deepest impression on the surviving hearers. Now this may be, for all that I know, my last words to you in this place; therefore I beseech you to hear me: An interruption, a suspension of my weak worthless pains and labour among you there will be, for any thing I know, from this day; but observe it is no Resignation from me, or my Reverend Brother; and therefore what other dissolution of the propertie and relation between your Pastour and you, there may be, as of that mutual intercourse, I shall not account or call it a forfeiture of his place, whatever others may call it, let them call it what they will. Then hearken to my words, as the words of a dying man, yet not dead, but alive, and perhaps shall not die, but live and declare the Word of the Lord, and hold forth the Word of the Lord to you many a time in this place, when ever it pleaseth God to set open a door for me.

If it be so, That the Ministers soundness in Doctrine, and holiness of Life and Conversation, do lay a great obligation on a people duly and conscienciously to practise every commanded duty, Then from this Doctrine I would suggest and leave with you several words and hints of

COUN-

counsel : And oh that the Lord God of Heaven would effectually engrave and set them home on every one of your hearts !

My first Counsel is this, *That when the Lord taketh away such Ministers, whose Doctrine is sound, and their Lives exemplarily holy, you would then be duely apprehensive, and deeply sensible, both of the inflicting cause, and also of the meritorious deserving cause thereof.*

1. *For the inflicting cause; and that is the Lord himself, Isa. 3. 1, 2. Who is it that taketh away from a people the natural staff, and the civil staff, the spiritual staff, saith the Prophet? The Lord, the Lord of Hosts. Who ever it be that is the instrument, it is certain it is the Lord himself that is the principal efficient cause of this judgement on a people; and this will appear, if we consider,*

1. *The Lord hath threatned this judgement on a rebellious people, Amos 8. 11, 12. I (saith the Lord) will bring this judgement on them. A most dreadful spiritual judgment! Gods Word is the spiritual food of our spiritual lives; and therefore, as the granting of it is a blessing indeed, so the withholding of it is a judgement indeed. This irefull, dreadful judgement the Lord, we see, threatens, yea, that is not all, the Lord hath not only threatned it, but*

2. *Inflicted it. As, the Lord hath taken*

... away his faithful Messengers and Embassadors,

1. Sometimes by death, out of the world, out of the land of the living. And thus the Lord took away the Prophet *Enoch*, *Gen.* 5. 24. And

2. Sometimes by removal. Thus the Lord took away the Prophet *Jonah* from *Israel*, and sent him to *Ninive*, as *Jonah* 1. 2. And thus *Paul* and *Barnabas* went away from the *Jewes*, and turned to the *Gentiles*, as *Acts* 13. 4.

3. Sometimes by deprivation. A time there was, when the good Priests and Levites were forced to flee their own places and possessions, *2 Chron.* 11. 13, 14.

4. Sometimes by Suspension. Thus a time there was, *When it was said to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets, prophesie not*, *Isa.* 30. 9, 10. Thus a time there was, when people would have Pastors, but would not endure faithful *Jeremiah*; and a time there was that there was a Law made, *Look ye speak no more in the name of Jesus*, *Acts* 4. 18. and a time there was, when *Paul*, and *Timotheus*, and *Silvanus*, were forbid to preach to the *Gentiles*, as *1 Thes.* 2. 15, 16. Thus we see the Lord himself hath inflicted this dreadful Judgement on a people; and the Lord hath divers waies, and methods and means to inflict it.

3. Con-

3. Consider, *The Church and people of the Lord hath been very sensible of the Lords hand in this Judgement*, as we may see in *Psal. 74. 1. & 9. verses compared*. Why, what is the matter? as if they have said, God was wont heretofore to give us signs and tokens, he would even work miracles for us; the Lord would send us some Prophets to converse with, and instruct us; we had those that could tell us how long our troubles should last; but now we see no sign, the Lord leaveth us as it were to the wide world, and how sensible was the Lords Church in this judgement? as ver. 1. of that *Psalme*. This is the first endeavour, *We are to be duely sensible, and deeply apprehensive of the insliding cause of such a Judgement*; and that is the Lord himself.

2. Of the meritorious Cause, and that is Sin. Say not we, it is long of such or such, but it is long of our selves, we may thank our selves for this, and we appeal to your selves, whether this judgement may not be charged

1. From the general inflexibleness & untractableness of people under the Ministry of the Word: For this very cause the Lord plagued and poured his vengeance upon the Ten Tribes, as in *2 Kings 17. from ver. 13. to 19. The Lord testified against Israel by all the Prophets, and by all the Seers, saying, Turn you*

from your evil wayes ; notwithstanding they would not bear. And for this very cause did the Lord afterwards plague all Judah , as *Jerem.* 29. 17. 18, 19. And for this very reason did the Lord Jesus Christ remove *Paul* from *Jerusalem*, because the people were a stiff-necked people, and they would not receive *Pauls* testimonie concerning Jesus, as *Acts* 22. 18. *Paul* had a great desire to stay at *Jerusalem*, as appeared by his reasoning with the Lord, as ver. 19, 20. But what saith the Lord Christ? ver. 23. Now can *England*, can *London* plead not guilty of this hainous provocation, a general unflexibleness, untractableness, under a Conscience-ransacking, a Conscience-searching Ministry? What shall the Lord do with such a people, under such a Ministry? Is it not just with God to let them alone that are profane and superstitious? let there be like people, like Priests? let the blind lead the blind, and let the wicked, rebellious Minister lead a wicked, loose people, that both may perish together everlastingly.

2. The unfruitfulness, formalitie, lukewarmness, declining of Gods own people; and for this the Lord threatens the Church of *Ephesus*, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. *I have* (saith Christ) *somewhat against thee, thou hast left thy first love*; though not absolutely for nature, yet eminently for measure: And can *England*, can *London* plead not guilty of this sad provocation?

vocation? Now indeed we cannot but observe, and approve of your flocking to the Lords Ordinances, as Doves to the holes of a window; but did you do so some moneths ago? Oh your voluntary and fearful distractions, avocations, diversions from the worship and service of God! And is it not just with the Lord to take away that abundance, and choise of spiritual helps a people had when they approved not of them, yea, when they undervalued, and despised, and abused them? Oh the Lord God help us all to affect our souls, and to lay our selves low before his all-seeing Majesty for our provoking him to do this! and endeavour to be duly apprehensive, and deeply sensible of the inflicting cause, and meritorious cause thereof.

2. *Take heed of a profane delight in loose, lewd, wicked, dissolute Ministers.* And herewe will premise two or three things.

1. *Too many people are too ready to cavil at many Ministers without a cause.* The life of our blessed Lord and Saviour, was it not traduced? did not some say that he was a friend to Publicans and sinners? We see Christ was cavilled at, and quarrelled with by some: And thus the holy Apostles, their lives were traduced, they went through evil report, as well as good report, 2 Cor.

10. 2. And thus *Athanasius*, who was traduced for an Adulterer by the *Arians*; and so *Luther* and *Calvin* are represented and reported by the Papists, as if they had been the vilest creatures in the world: The wicked man cavils at, and finds spots, at least do what he can to find spots in the Sun; and some, who are not so wicked, do look for an Evangelical perfection in Ministers, and all theirs, their wives, and their children, and their servants, and their company: How ready are people grossly and uncharitably to censure a Minister for any, yea, the least they discern in him, or his; and is this their vertue? nay, is it not their vice and corruption?

2. It is no breach of the Churches peace, no argument of a contentious and unquiet spirit in a Minister, to speak vilely of vile Ministers and enemies of the Churches peace. Why, who are they? *John Baptist* tells us, he calls them vipers, a generation of vipers: why, were they not Preachers? *Matth.* 3. 7. and will you say that *John Baptist* was a man of a contentious spirit, of an unquiet spirit? And who were they whom our blessed Saviour calls a generation of vipers? as *Matth.* 12. 34, 38, 39. and who were they that our Saviour calls a generation of vipers, and an evil and adulterous generation? were they not Preachers? and it is very observable, both *John Baptist*, and our

our Saviour did call those Preachers thus, even in the hearing of them who were their ordinary hearers; and do but observe what strange terms of disgrace S. Peter gives them, 2 Pet. 2. 12. to certain Preachers in his time, ver. 14. what strange terms doth the Apostle give those Teachers, whose pernicious ways many would follow, as in ver. 2. of that chap. but did not the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Chair? and did they not preach some good Doctrine, insomuch that Jesus Christ bids the people hear them, and observe what they said, though not what they did, as Matth. 23. 1, 2, 3. Therefore may some say, It seemeth strange, that Christ should thus disgrace the Scribes and Pharisees, was not this the way to make their Ministry contemptible?

First, It is very clear and undeniable that there were a generation of pittiful sorry Teachers, as in Matth. 9. 36. Why, did not the people enjoy the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees? yes, they did; but the Scribes and Pharisees were Idol Shepherds, they knew not how to feed their flock, and therefore Christ lookt on the people as sheep scattered abroad for all the Scribes and Pharisees. They did not understand that there was heart-murder, or heart-adultery, until our blessed Saviour instructed them. The Scribes and Pharisees they did but strike at the bough onely, but our Saviour preached with authority and not as the Scribes did. And withal I answer.

Se.

Secondly, That beyond all peradventure our blessed Saviour saw that although the Scribes and Pharisees did teach some truths, yet by their life and doctrine they did more mischeif then good, and therefore the more credit they had among the people the more mischeif they were like to do; and therefore from hence our blessed Lord and Saviour calls them *a generation of vipers*. But I hope you will not count it an argument of the breach of the Churches peace to speak vildely of a vile Ministry. It was no more then *John Baptist* did, and then our Saviour did.

Thirdly, No mans sin deserves so sharply to be reprov'd as the sins of Ministers, because their sins of all others are the cheif sins committed in a land; at the Sanctuary profaneness too too often begins. Therefore when Gods people met in their publick fasts made solemn confession of those sins of the first magnirude, by which they had most provoked the Lord, they do make confession chiefly of the sins of their Magistrates and their Ministers. *Neb. 9.33,34.* The *Jews* there bewailed the sins of their Magistrates and Ministers, as the particular cause of their plagues. Oh the sins of Teachers are the Teachers of sin, and therefore no mans sin deserves to be so sharply reprov'd, as the scandalous sins of Ministers. Now if you love your souls, take heed and beware of a profane delight in lewd, loose, dissolute Ministers. We
finde

finde the Lord complaining of the wickedness of the Prophets, and of the Priests and People, as *Jer. 5. ult.* the People did take a profane delight in false Prophets, and in polluted Priests; and so likewise in the Prophet *Micah, chap. 2 ver. 11.* the people, although they did expose the Prophet *Micah* and other true Prophets, yet they did approve of, and delight in false Prophets, such as were of their own leven, their own way and mould, such as would flatter them, and promise them wine and strong drink: and are there not many such people in the world, that had rather hear such a Minister, than such as preach close-walking with God, and of getting to Heaven under pain of damnation? Will you cry up, and will you profanely delight in a Ministry that shall preach, Peace, Peace, to all profane rebellious people; in short, such a one as will poyson you in his Doctrine, or in his example?

Thirdly, Take heed and beware of a sinfull idolizing of godly, faithfull, Ministers; the Apostle decrieth this with much zeal, arden- cy, and fervency of spirit, what is *Pauls* plan- ting, and what is *Apolloes* watering, *1 Cor. 3. 5, 6.* as excellent gifts, parts, and graces as these men had, yet they look higher: so it is your duty to look above mens parts, and above mens gifts and graces: *Paul* and *Apollo* cannot give increase; *Paul* indeed may plant, but there is no rooting indeed of these plants, but

The great Benefit of

but by Christ. And reade *verse 7.* it is God, and he onely that can give increase: as *Elisha*es Servant could carry his Masters staff and lay it on the dead child, but the child could not be raised to life until *Elisha* came himself, thus godly faithfull Ministers can but lay Gods Message before you, but unless the Lord set it to the heart, never a dead soul can be raised from the death of sin to the life of grace and holiness. Remember, godly and faithfull Ministers, although they have the Lords Sword, yet they have not the Lord Christs Arm; and alas what can the Lord Christs Sword do without his Arm?

Fourthly, Take heed of being leavened with prejudice against the Ministry of the Word, because of the misdemeanour or miscarriage of the Minister. Surely the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments doth not depend on the quality of the Minister. It is the Word of the Lord that converts, not the person of the Dispenser or Speaker. A seed that is sown in a good soyl, may, yea will grow and thrive, although perhaps the Sower had a very dirty hand; as *2 Cor. 3. 2, 3.* the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, that they are, saith he, *the Epistle of Christs Ministry by us*; the Hand is Christs, Ministers are but the Pen. Hence it was, that the Ministry of the Scribes and Pharisees was not to be rejected, but to be esteemed, so long as they failed not in the substance thereof; and hence the Apostle rejoyceth that Christ was

prea-

prea-
17,
fore
diffe
blie
for
For
phen
Jer
Pri
to sa
in M
falls
spea
his
of t
such
the
Hos
men
and
a M
lea
bec
bef
bee
ste
on
ny
vo
ge

preached of the false Apostles, *Phil. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18.* though out of envie; take heed therefore and beware of a total separation from, dissenting of, and forsaking Church-assemblies: and yet I conceive it is a very rare thing for unconverted Ministers to convert some. For what saith the Lord by the Prophet *Zephania, Zeph. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.* *Oh saith the Lord, to Jerusalem, that hath such Prophets and such Priests, woe to such a City, to such a Country, to such a Parish;* and what saith Christ himself in *Matth. 15. 14.* *Let them alone;* oft times it falls out so, that it made Archbishop *Abbot* speak in a Lecture of his, and profess, that his heart did even bleed within him, to think of the precious souls of many people who had such Ministers, that if they had not been in the Ministry, they would not have been fit Hogherds for Swine. And yet we must remember not to tie the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments to the goodness or badness of a Ministers person.

Fifthly, Take heed and beware of being leavened with prejudice against all Ministers, because of the vileness and monster-like unbecoming carriage of some Ministers. It hath been granted over and over, that some Ministers evil, licentious carriage and conversations are notorious; the Lord knows, too many Ministers have *Esau's* hands with *Jacob's* voice: what then, must this redound to the general disgrace of all Ministers? Because some
pro-

professors of the Law live lawless, must therefore all be censured and condemned for lawlessivers? Because *Judas* was a Devil, and a son of perdition, will you therefore say that all the Disciples of Christ were naught? Perhaps you do know some Sir *Johns*, some blind Seers, some blind watchmen, who know not Heavens way, some blind droans; or secondly, some that carry themselves insolently, as *Jer. 20.1,2.* as *Pasher* did; or thirdly, some that are too too like that evil servant in the Gospel, as *Luke 12.45.* or perhaps you know fourthly, some apostatizing *Demusses*, who imbrace this present world, and revolt from their principles and profession, as *2 Tim. 4.10.* Or perhaps you know, fifthly, some aspiring and climbing *Diatrephes*, as *3 John 9.* perhaps you know some such as these as I have instanced, what then? is there any profession as it were, but it hath a certain skum? why then in the face of some, who thorow grace are free from these miscarriages, take heed and beware of being leavened with prejudice against all Ministers, because of the vilenets and miscarriage of some.

Sizthly, Be earnest with the Lord for a godly, faithfull Ministry, whose labour and pains among the people the Lord useth to bless. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Patron of all Livings, as a Reverend man, now in Heaven, once said; He can present whom he will to a Parish, and he can restore whom
he

he will to their people, as *Acts* 12. 5, 6, 7. as he did *Peter* out of prison by the peoples prayers; and thus when *Paul* was in prison at *Rome*, observe how he writes to *Philemon*, in *ver.* 22. of his Epistle; and thus when the Author of the *Hebrews* was restrained from preaching, observe what an Exhortation he useth *Heb.* 13. 18, 19. Oh pray therefore, pray for godly faithfull Ministers, their pains, their labours, the Lord useth to bless among a people; as *Mel.* 2. 6. we read that the Lord blesseth the labours of *Levi*, so that he was an Instrument in the Lords hand to turn wicked men from their iniquity; and *ver.* 5. so it was said of *Barnabas*, that by his Ministry much people were added to the Lord, *Acts* 11. 24. And if we would have godly faithfull Ministers, as we must pray for them, so we must first repent us of our sins, *Jer.* 3. 14, 15. repent we must of our sins, and particularly our contempt of the Ordinances and Worship of God. Secondly, We must prize the Gospel more than we have done; the Gospel loves to come and to stay where it is welcome. Of all the seven Churches of *Asia*, the Church of *Philadelphia* was the best; that Church used the Word best, and that Church enjoyed the Word longest. Be earnest with the Lord for godly faithfull Ministers, whose pains and labours among the people the Lord useth to bless and prosper.

7. Be earnest with the Lord, that the refining

D

Work

Work of a National Reformation, a City, a Country, a Family-Reformation, a personal Reformation may begin at the refining and purging of Ministers. None will deny, but that there is great need of a Reformation; there is none of you but will confess, that the seed of leaven had need sometimes to be winnowed out from among us, as *2 Chron. 29. 48.* *Hezekiah* began at the Priests and Levites, *Hezekiah* began his reformation at them; and thus at our first reformation, the Protestants did then affirm, that there could never be any good Reformation, unless they began at the Court of *Rome*: and it is very observable, that when the Prophet speaks of the Lord Christs coming, as a refining fire, and as Fullers soap, this also is prophesied of refining the sons of *Levi*, *Mal. 2. 2.* when he shall purifie the sons of *Levi*, when he shall purge them as gold and silver; as it was in *Judah*, in that good Reign of that good King *Hezekiah*, *2 Chron. 29. 34.* the Priests were too few there; and as it was in *Judah* then, whether it be not so in *England* now, I affirm not, but leave you to judge. But a Ministers soundness in Doctrine and holiness of life and conversation, should lay a great obligation on a people, duly and conscientiously to practice every command to duty. And this may suffice for the second Doctrine. Come we now to the third Doctrine deducible to be handled from this Text; and that is this, *That in the*

due practice of commanded duties, Gods people may warrantably and confidently expect much of the gracious presence of the God of peace, even in the worst of times. These things think on, saith the Apostle, ver. 8. these things do, saith the Apostle in the Text; and what then? the God of peace shall be with you. In the due practice of commanded duties, Gods people may confidently expect much of the gracious presence of the God of peace in the worst of times: Then take counsel from this Doctrine, that you may have the gracious presence of the God of peace with you; and if this Pulpit were my death-bed, I should give such counsel as these following to you.

First, Crown the Prince of peace, the Lord Jesus Christ in your hearts and lives; I say, crown the Prince of peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, in your hearts and lives, receive him as your Lord and King, set a crown on his head here in your hearts and lives, and he will crown you with peace in this life, and set a Crown of Glory, a Crown of Immortality on your heads in the life to come. If you have Christ, you have all things, all heavenly graces, all spiritual comforts, all temporal blessings; if you have Christ, God will, God can then give you all things that are good for you; without Christ, you are not, and you can do nothing that is acceptable with God.

Therefore this is my first Counsel to you,
Crown the Prince of peace, the Lord Jesus
D 2 Christ,

Christ, in your hearts and lives.

Secondly, Then maintain a constant and conscientious intimate communion with the God of peace. It was good counsel which *Eliphas* gave to *Job*, *Job* 22. 21. Would you have much of the presence of the God of peace? Oh then frequently fall down and lye at the foot-stool of the Lords Throne, for grace, and for peace; and when you do so, be not unmindfull of us, who have often been your mouths to God, and Gods mouth to you. And to engage and encourage you herein, consider.

First, The Lord Jesus Christ hath promised to be with his poor Ministers always, even to the end of the world, *Matth.* 28. *ult.* If all-ways, not in the Pulpit onely; no, the Lord hath promised to be with his faithfull servants out of the Pulpit as well as in the Pulpit; in the prison sealing the truth, as well as in the Pulpit preaching the truth: Oh then, will you put this in suit by prayer. That the Lord Christ will be with his poor Ministers to the end of the world. 2. *We shall not fail to pray for you*, *1 Sam.* 12. 23. Our sequestering from our preaching-work from you, will give us advantage to lay out more time to fetch sighs from our hearts in praying-work for you; and I trust the Lord will give us hearts, so to improve our time for you, as *Samuel* said; so *God forbid we should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you*, as *Peter* did to the people with

with a promise, as 1 Pet. 5. 10. and not onely for you ; but

Secondly, Even for such as have treated us somewhat uncivilly and unkindly, to say no more of them, although the number of them are very inconsiderable ; but for such, I trust we shall not forget in our prayers : As *Moses* fell down on his face for the children of *Israel*, when they treated him very unkindly, and spit in his face, I trust we shall not forget *Moses* prayer for the people : And so, when they danced before their Idol, *Jeremiab* wept for those in his time, as *Jerem.* 13. 17. And that we shall not forget *Jeremiab*, weeping for you : And I trust likewise, that we shall remember *Stephen*, being on his knees for his persecutors, powring out his life and prayer together, *Acts* 7. 60. I doubt not but my Reverend Brother, and my self, shall remember *Pauls* willingness, to spend, and to be spent both in prayer and preaching for you all. Though the more abundantly he loved, the less he was beloved, 2 *Cor.* 12. 15.

3. Maintain and nourish all tenderness in your Conscience all your dayes : Oh go not without, much less against the dictates of Conscience ! rebel not against the light of it ; beware of stifling and suppressing a warning conscience, lest a warning conscience

The great Benefit of

prove a gnawing conscience, and prove a tormenting conscience : And consider, First, Remorse of conscience hath an eye against all sin past. Secondly, Tenderness of conscience, which hath an eye to all sin to come. Take heed then of all calmnesse of heart.

Fourthly, Take heed of Apostatizing. *Chrysostome* hath a notable saying, namely, *That Ministers have a greater trouble, because they never find their work as they leave it, as other workmen do.* Oh in how short a time doth a poor Minister find all his work put out of frame and order ! Did not *Moses* find it so ? *Exod. 32. 8.* *Moses* had no sooner turned his back as it were, but the people were turned out of Gods way of worship. And did not *Paul* find it so ? *Gal. 1. 6.* The *Galatians* were quickly removed ; *Paul* was but lately gone from them, and they were quickly apostatized. Now this commeth to pass,

First, It is by Reason of a crafty, subtil, deceitful Devil : As in the Gospel we read, *While men slept, the Enemy came and sowed tares,* *Matth. 13. 25.* And who this Enemy is, we may see in Christs expounding the Parable, ver. 39.

And secondly, Partly by Reason of mens
own

own deceitful hearts, as *Heb. 3. 12.* observe it. There is an evil heart of unbelief in the best; it dwells in the best, but it reigns in the wicked. And what is that? one of these evil hearts of unbelief, in apostatizing, in departing from the living God.

Thirdly, it is partly by Reason of deceitful workers, as the Apostle calls false Apostles. Is it partly by reason of such? Then take heed of apostatizing, either from truth of Doctrine, purity of Worship, or practice of Conversation.

1. From truth of Doctrine. Be not weary of old truths; take heed, and beware of itching after novel Doctrines; take heed and beware of admiring this or that opinion, which, as new lights, drop down from Heaven, but indeed is but as the smok of the bottomless pit

2. From purity of Worship also. Let not your zeal be cold, but kindled against every bracelet of the Scarlet Whore. How often doth the Apostle call the people adulterers and adulteresses, because they apostatize from the Word and Worship of God.

3. In Practice and Conversation. Prize the Gospel, love it, and live accordingly to it: With constancy look on every motion of thy soul, and every action of thy life, as a step to life, or a step to death; as a step

The great Benefit of

towards Heaven, or a step to Hell, *Heb. 10. 38.* To close this Counsel, the Author of the *Hebrews* bringeth in the Lord, protesting against Apostatizing. If any man draw back from Gospel-principle, and Gospel-worship, or from a Gospel-conversation, saith the Lord, *If any man draw back thus, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* Tremble then at this, thou Apostatizer, whoever thou art; wherever thou sittest or standest, *My Son shall have no pleasure in thee.* I loath and abominate that person, saith the Lord.

5. All of you then study peace, and particularly you who do unfeignedly set your hearts and faces towards Heaven, study peace, and follow after it; though it run from you, pursue after it. You profess your selves to be them that are truly fearing God, and truly honouring the King, and truly loving one another, Oh then seek peace.

You who do unfeignedly set your hearts and faces towards Heaven, study peace alway, and decline all dividing principles and practices among you; and that you may not either breed or feed circumstantial differences, or substantial divisions, consider, God is the God of Peace; our Saviour is the Prince of Peace; our Comforter is the Comforter of Peace; our Calling is the Calling of Peace;

Peace;

a Godly Ministry.

41 ..

Peace ; our Way is the Way of Peace. Oh
that we may so live in Peace, that the
God of Love and Peace may dwell
with us ; and that the God
of Peace may live with us
here, that we may live
with the God of
Peace hereafter !

Mr.

THE
LIBRARY
OF THE
MUSEUM
OF
ART AND
ARCHAEOLOGY
OF THE
METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM OF ART
NEW YORK

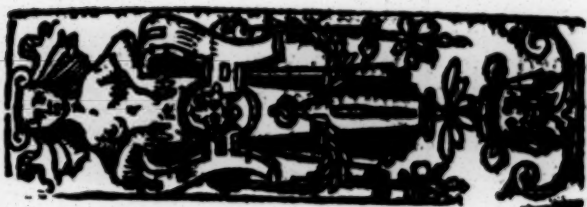


M
C

And



God



Mr. Bull of Newington-Green his Far- vvel Sermon.

John 14. 16.

*And I will send the Father, and he shall
give you another Comforter, that
he may abide with you for ever.*



THE Observation that I com-
mended to you out of these
words, was this,

*It is the great work for which
the Spirit of Christ is given by
God, to comfort the hearts of his people.*

You

The Spirit of Christ

You may remember that I have formerly opened the truth to you, and have shewed you what this Spiritual comfort is, that the Spirit of Christ works in the hearts of his Disciples. I gave it you in this Description.

It is that inward, spiritual satisfaction, that the heart of a gracious person finds in, and through Jesus Christ, in all the various dispensations of God towards him, whereby he is enabled to go on in cheerfulness in the way that God would have him, whether it be by a way of doing, or of suffering. And herein I shewed,

1. The nature of the spiritual satisfaction.
2. The Author of it, It is God by his Spirit.
3. The Object of it, God through Jesus Christ.
4. The proper Subject of this inward spiritual comfort, the people of God.
5. and lastly, The Effects of the spiritual comfort; it is to strengthen the heart, both to do and suffer.

I came the last time, to shew you how the Spirit of God doth this.

1. He doth it as an enlightning Spirit, by shewing where comfort is to be had, by opening the eyes of the understanding, as he did Hagers bodily eyes to see the well of water.

2. He doth it as a quickning Spirit, bringing the soul into that capacitie to take in the comfort; for what comfort can a dead man receive? a Cordial and a puddle is all one to a dead man.

3. He works this inward spiritual satisfaction, by discovering the truth of this vital Principle in the Soul: for a man may have a principle of Grace and spiritual Life in him, and not know it, that though he has the spiritual comfort, yet it is all one as if he had it not.

Now this is the great Question that is debated in the heart of a Child of God. Whether he be regenerated and born again? whether he hath grace in his soul, that grace that will qualifie him for glory? and if he was satisfied as to this, he would not be a moment without comfort: But he is afraid that he is dead in sin, that he is a stranger to the life of grace; hence ariseth all his spiritual troubles; now the spirit of God comes in, and resolves the case, comes into the soul by his bright Reflections, and fills our souls with comfort: Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God.

4. The Spirit of God is a comforting Spirit, as he openeth the vein of godly sorrow in the soul: Truly this is the next way to

to spiritual comfort, when a man can once spiritually mourn for sin, *Matth. 5. 4. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Godly sorrow opens the vein, and lets out the matter that hinders comfort, and causeth inward trouble in the soul: A gracious man takes a great delight in godly sorrow; oh! it is a matter of marvellous comfort to a child of God, when he can kindly mourn for his sins.

5. The Spirit of God comforts the soul as he is a mortifying Spirit. Thus he takes away that that is the ground and matter of Believers trouble, mortifying that sin that is the cause of his sorrow; pride, unbelief, inordinate love to the world.

6. The Spirit of God works comfort in the hearts of his people, by setting their own spirit to seek for comfort in Gods own wayes.

The last thing I did for the Explication of the Doctrine, was to add some Propositions and they were such as these.

1. Many a gracious heart, that hath fellowship with the Spirit of God in his sanctifying work, may feel and find none in his comforting work. The Sun may operate where it doth not shine: A man may be in a state of salu-

tion, when he doth not feel the joy of salvation, *Isa. 51. 3.* You shall find those that fear the Lord, and had the comforts of the Holy Ghost, yet walked in darkness.

2. Even those gracious souls, that have the fellowship of the comforting Spirit to day, may want it to morrow. This is not daily bread, while the Saints are on this side Heaven. The Solstice of a Christians comfort, doth not last all the day long; they are not feasted with this every day; they have the night, as well as the day; there is a night as well as a day in the heart of a gracious soul; as it is natural in the common course of nature, the Sun may shine to day, but it may be clouded to morrow. Thus it was with that holy man, *Psalms 30. 7.* Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. And God doth this in infinite wisdom, to put a difference between earth and Heaven, this valley of tears, and that state of glory, that so the hearts of Gods people may be kept in a frame of longing after the state of Heaven; God will have his people be groaning here, that his people may groan after that condition when all sorrowing and sighing shall flee away. God reserves perfect comfort to be the reward of perfect holiness; while our graces are imperfect, we must make account that our comfort will be so

too:

too : Tears will be never wiped from our eyes, till sin be quite taken out of our hearts.

3. Those that have had this spiritual comfort in their souls, they may lose not only the impression of the Spirit's comfort, but they may feel the impression of Gods anger. Heman complains, that the wrath of God did hang upon him, and that the terrors of God had cut him off. A gracious heart hath real grounds of consolation, though he hath not present sensible comforts.

A child of God hath alwayes that, that if he did see, he could not be without comfort; the Promises are his support, he hath the first fruits of the Spirit, and right to eternal life: A child of God shall alwayes have so much to keep up his hopes and affiance upon God; a child of God, in the darkest condition, though he doth not see enough to make him rejoyce in God, yet he sees enough to make him trust in God; though he walk in darkness, and see no light, yet he trusts in God. Job sayes, *Though the Lord slay him, yet he would trust in him.* David was in great trouble, while he was in that disquiet expostulation, *Why art thou cast down O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? trust in God.*

5. Those that have inward comfort; from the Spirit,

for
the
bec
bec
Spi
it t
pel.

2.
out
layes
Whe

Spirit, may at the same time have little comfort from Gods outward dispensations. It may be dark without, when its light within; while Stephen sees nothing but blood here below, he saw Heaven above: And Christ tells his Disciples In the world they should have tribulation, but in him they should have peace.

6. and lastly. *Though this be one great work of the Spirit of God to comfort the hearts of Christs Disciples, yet there are some special seasons wherein the Spirit of God gives out this comfort. There are seasons of sadness, there is a season of heaviness, and there is need of it: There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. I shewed you some of the Seasons.*

1. One special season of the Spirits comforting the renewed soul, is presently upon the souls first salvation. After the Spirit is become a Spirit of Adoption, presently it becomes a Spirit of Consolation; after the Spirit hath come into the soul in the Law, it then nextly appears a Spirit in the Gospel.

2. Another Season when the Spirit gives out this comfort, is just before the Lord layes upon his people any great affliction. When was it that Christ was transfigured,

The Spirit of Christ

and his face did shine as the Sun? it was immediately before his bloody passion. Christ was first taken into the Mount, before he was lifted up upon the Cross. When was the voice heard, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, but just before he was led into the wilderness to be tempted. When was *Paul* lifted up into Heaven? it was immediately before Satan was sent to buffet him. Thus God gives his people something before-hand to support their spirits, that they may not faint; the Disciples were full of comfort, *Acts* 5. 41. And when was this? immediately just before they were carried before the Council, and whipt up and down like Vagabonds and Rogues, for preaching the Gospel.

3. Another Season when the Spirit gives out this Comfort, is in the time of Suffering. God comes in the nick of time; especially if a man suffer for righteousness sake, if his suffering be upon the account of Christ, he seldom fails to send the Comforter for the relieving of his spirit, *1 Pet.* 4. 13. *But rejoyce, in as much as ye are partakers of Christs sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

Bodily confinement, and inward streights, are the time of the Souls greatest enlargement. *John* had his Vision in the Isle of *Patmos*. When a child of God is brought to a
piece

piece of bread, then is the season for God to feed him with heavenly *Manna* ; *Jacob* had glorious Visions, while he was flying from the wrath of his Brother, when he had nothing but a heap of stones for his pillow. It was in the wilderness that God speaks to his Church thus. I told you of Mr. *Glover*, a prisoner, who found no comfort in the time of his imprisonment ; but when he was going to the stake, he cryed out, *He is come, he is come*, meaning the Spirit, the Comforter.

4. Another Season of Comfort is, after some special exercise of Grace, godly sorrow for sin, fresh actings in the pardon of sin, and new Engagements, and Resolutions, and Promises of more close walking with God, after declining from him.

5. Another Season of Comfort is, After some great Trials and Afflictions. Light is then most pleasant, when we newly are come out of a dark place ; after Thunder, comes Lightning ; after a storm, comes a calm : God led his people first into the wilderness, and then into the Land of *Canaan* : It is often so in Gods Dispensations towards his people, their greatest Afflictions go before their greatest Deliverances ; And therefore let not the Saints of God despair when they are at the lowest, when they walk in dark-

ness, and see no light, yet let them trust in the Lord.

6. Another Season of Comfort was, When men were conscientiously diligent in their particular Callings, then they walk with God. To this I gave you an instance in the Shepherds, they were faithful and diligent in their callings, they were watching over their flocks by night, and then the Angel comes, and tells them, *To you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*, Luke 2. 11. A company of poor Shepherds, keeping of their sheep, God appears unto them, and manifesteth his comforting presence, when the Scribes and Pharisees, notwithstanding all their long Prayers, and their strict Rites and Ceremonies, hear not a word of him.

7. Another Season of Comfort is, When we are either preparing for, or in the spiritual act of some duty. When grace is exercised to prepare the heart to pray, and in attendance upon such an Ordinance, then oftentimes the Spirit of God is with them, to let poor souls in their endeavours find acceptance with God. *Hannah* had been praying to God, but what melody did she find in her heart! When *Mary* sat at Christ's feet, how doth Christ fill her heart with comfort, sealing up her Salvation to her!

I now

I now come to close with some Application.

Use. If it be the work of the Spirit of God to comfort the hearts of Christs Disciples, then by way of information I gather this, *That a poor soul is very hardly settled and satisfied in point of Comfort.* Sure it is a hard matter to comfort a poor soul, when one of the Persons of the blessed Trinity must be employed on purpose to do it. This is an Office belonging to the Holy Ghost, when he is to be the *Paraclete*, the comfort of the Holy Ghost. This sure is a hard matter, to comfort the wounded spirit, when the soul is full of the spirit of bondage. Oh! the hesitates, the jealousies, the doubts and fears, the objections that a poor soul makes against his spiritual peace and comfort! now it begins to take comfort, then it doubts again; now he believeth, and takes courage, but anon he is afraid; there is a great deal ado to fasten comfort upon a poor soul, 2 Cor. I. 21, 22. What a heap of words are there together, and it is all little enough to comfort a poor soul! *Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, and hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* It is not without much tugging and drawing that the soul is first brought to believe, and then, when it doth believe, it is a hard thing to perswade

Use of Information

The Spirit of Christ

it that it doth believe: There is a strange kind of squemishness upon the heart, he thinks that that is no comfort to be taken that doth belong to him. *Luther sayes, It is a harder thing to comfort a troubled Conscience, then to raise the dead.* Surely it must be as hard, when nothing but the same power must do it.

The Soul is hardly convinced; but all the glad tidings of the Gospel, are golden streams, and all the Promises are but pleasant Fancies, without any Reality; but that these things should belong to him, this he cannot believe, for want of Faith: So that the Spirit of God is fain to come in, and end the controversie, before the soul will be satisfied.

2. If it be the work of the Spirit of God, to comfort the hearts of his people: then all the comfort of Christless and graceless souls is nothing worth, there is no true peace, for they are not the Disciples of Christ, which are the proper subjects of this comfort; they will not hearken to Christ, nor learn of Christ, but they cast *his words behind their back, and break his bands asunder.*

Those that do not learn Christs Precepts, and follow Christs Canons, and obey Christs Commands, they are none of Christs Disciples; and to be sure, they have not the spirit of Christ, which is the Efficient in this comfort,
and

and without the root there cannot be the fruit, for this inward peace is the fruit of the Spirit. And therefore what comfort they have, it is either a finfull comfort, which to be sure will end in sorrow, or else at best, it is but a carnal comfort, which will soon vanish like the crackling of thorns under a pot; *There is no peace, saith God, to the wicked;* there is no peace with God as long as you are at peace with sin.

3. Here they are stumbled with the riddle, that the people of God should be sorrowing, yet always rejoycing; *as sorrowing, yet always rejoycing*, the carnal world think this to be a contradiction; though they be troubled without, yet they have peace within; though they have matter of sorrow in respect of outward affliction, yet they have fellowship with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, which gives peace in affliction, joy in sorrow, light in darkness, which fills thee with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Secondly, If the Holy Ghost be the onely Comforter of the hearts of Gods people; then let me exhort every one of you to labour for an interest in this Comforter. Friends, I beseech you be restless till you have got some evidence of the Comforter in your souls by the inhabitation of the Spirit in your hearts; without you have an interest in Christ, there is no comfort, no true comfort to be expected; no comfort in prosperity, no comfort

in adversity, no comfort in life, nor in death
 no peace with your consciences: Men may
 make a shift to keep themselves at quiet for
 the present, by lulling conscience, they may
 have a kind of peace from a false principle; Ah
 but what will you do when storms arise? what
 will you do when death and affliction comes!
Just lay quietly asleep till the storm came:
 O my friends, we must shortly lie a dying,
 the Lord knows how soon; O what will you
 do for comfort in a dying hour? all other
 comforts may forsake you, and before that
 time you may meet with sorrow and heavie
 afflictions, so that all your friends in the world
 will not do you good; your friends may fail,
 your hearts may fail, and then no comfort but
 the comfort of the Holy Ghost will do you
 good; the time may come, that all your
 friends may prove miserable comforters, when
 God comes to deal with the soul, to set sin
 home upon the conscience, to lay sin before
 us, then what will you do? We are all guilty
 of sins of omission and sins of commission; when
 these come to be charged upon the soul, what
 will you then do? then no plaister of com-
 fort will stick, but those of the Spirits lay-
 ing on; unless the Spirit seal up the pardon
 of sin, the love of God to the soul, nothing
 will quiet and comfort the soul; however
 men may be merry for a time, yet there is a
 time of sorrow that will come, when they
 shall reflect upon their wayes, when they
 shall

sha
 ro
 wil
 ter
 refl
 wil
 refl

this

Pro
 ter i
 vinc
 ing
 of t
 an
 war
 God
 outv

S
 You
 dren
 Spir
 Lord
 rit,
 so pr

Th
 sorte

shall see nothing but sin behind them, and terrors before them : Oh ! what amazement will seize upon their souls ! they have no interest in God, in Christ, they have no interest in the Promises ; there is nothing that will comfort you, unless you have an interest in the Spirit.

But then, what shall I do, that I may get this comforting Spirit into my Soul ?

First, *Thirst earnestly after it.* The Promise is made to those that thirst after it, *Isa. 44. 3.* Thirst after him in his convincings, in his humblings, in his sanctifying mercy : Oh let the desire and longing of thy soul run out this way ! no matter for an Estate, no matter for Friends and outward comforts, if thou hast the Spirit of God, thou hast that that is paramount to all outward comforts.

Secondly, *Pray earnestly for the Spirit.* You are not so willing to give your children what they want, as God is to give his Spirit to them that ask it. Cry mightily, *Lord, give me thy Spirit ;* and cry to the Spirit, and say, as *Laban to Abieam, Come in,* so pray the Spirit to come in to thy Soul.

Thirdly, If you would have this Comforter to come and abide with you, *You must resolve*

refuse to become Christs Disciple. It is onely for such that Christ prays that God would send the Comforter; You must hearken and obey him, and follow him wheresoever he goeth. You know the terms upon which you must be Christs Disciple, *Matth. 16.24.* *He must deny himself, and take up his Cross, and daily follow Christ. He must deny himself.* There is two selfs in a man, nay, three selfs, and they must be denied; but however the first two must be denied, if you intend to be Christs disciple.

1. *A mans righteous self.* If any thing that we are, that we have, or can do, from our works or duties, any thing of our own, all must be denied in point of Justification.

2. *Sinful self.* A mans corruptions must be denied, pride, passion, and love to the world.

3. *Natural self.* Friends, estates, relations, credit, and honour, and outward comforts, these may be denied, you may be called to part with them; but if they come in competition with Christ, they must be denied.

2. You must take up the cross of Christ, rather then forsake his honour, or disobey his commands. You must resolve to follow Christ wheresoever he shall lead you, either in a way of active and passive obedience; you must take up Christs load, you must undergo his burden.

Now

Now Christians, are you resolved upon this? now sit down and consider what it will cost you to be Christians; and if you would have the best, you must be contented with the worst; and if you are resolved upon this, then you are the true disciples of Christ, and you are under the promise of his comfort, and Christ is praying the Father to send you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever.

2 Use. Is of Exhortation, wherein I shall apply my self to the arue disciples of Christ, those that have had communion with Christ in his sanctifying presence; labour after communion with him in his comforting presence. To all others, that are without the Spirit of God, I may say, as *Jehu* to *Jehoram*, *What hast thou to do with these things?*

2 Use of
Exhortation.

Labour to be convinced of the need and want of Christ; but such as have been partakers of the Spirit of Christ as a sanctifying Spirit, labour after communion with him as a comforting Spirit; and to this end I shall stir you up to this,

1. By way of Motive.

2. By way of Comfort.

First, by way of Motive. Though you have some comfort, it is but little in comparison of what you may have, and in comparison

parison of what you may stand in need of, though a Saint would not change the saddest hour of his life for the sweetest hour in his former condition. If the Saints of God did enjoy the comforts that they might, oh what blessed lives might they live ! but they are so full of trouble, as if there were no Holy Ghost the Comforter. The people of God are oftentimes troubled without a cause, as that holy man, *Why art thou cast down oh my soul ?* He could not render a true account of his trouble ; he was sad, but he could not tell why or wherefore.

2. When there is cause, they are apt to be troubled without measure. In those cases, where it is a sin not to be troubled at all, the people of God are apt to be troubled overmuch, as the *Israelites* in their bondage in *Egypt*. It were a sin for them not to be troubled ; but they were so full of troubles, that they could not hearken to *Moses* and *Aaron*. And so the *Disciples* in the Text, it were a sin for them not to be troubled for the absence of Christs body ; but so to be troubled, as if God could not comfort them without him, this was their weakness : And to come to our cases, it were a sin to slight this Dispensation of God that is coming upon us, if we should not be troubled for the loss of the Ministers of Jesus Christ ; but to mourn before God under the sense of this Dispensation,

sation, to mourn so much, as to think that when these are gone, all is gone, to be so much troubled, as not to hearken to the words of the Text, *That we have a Comforter*. I remember an admirable expression of a child to his Mother, when his Father was dead, to shew, *That out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God can manifest his praise*. Why Mother (sayes the child) *though my Father be dead, yet God is alive*. May not I say so to you? Though your Ministers be as it were naturally dead, yet is not God alive? is not the Spirit of God alive? Though you have some comfort, yet you have little in comparison of what you may have, if you seek for it.

2. Study the excellent nature of the comfort, how little soever a man hath of this spiritual comfort; it will sweeten his condition, be it what it will be. When a man hath communion with the Spirit of God, he hath comfort in all conditions; then, though a mans condition be never so bad, yet it is very good, *Isab. 3. 17. Though the Fig-tree shall not blossom, though the fruit be not in the Vines, the labour of the Olive shall cease, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. He can fetch Hope, and ground his Faith upon the*

the Promises, though the Providences and Dispensations of God be never so mysterious; the comfort of the Spirit doth make up the want of all other comforts: The comforts of Ordinances are sweet comforts, Sermon-comforts are sweet comforts, Sacrament-comforts are sweet comforts; Ah, but the comfort of the Spirit can supply the want of all these! all outward crosses cannot hinder these inward comforts; *man that hath these comforts, may have a Feast with bread and water; a little of this comfort is able to sweeten a whole Ocean of sorrow: In the multitude of thy thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* Psal. 94: 18. So that when the hearts of Gods people are filled with sad thoughts, what will become of themselves; what will become of their Families, what will become of the Church of God, what will become of the Ministry of the Gospel, and of the Ordinances of Christ, they are full of sad fears and distracting thoughts; when they have a multitude of thoughts, in the midst of all, these spiritual comforts can comfort and refresh the Soul: Oh labour after a greater share of this comfort!

God hath cast us upon sad times, wherein we shall have need of more then ordinary comfort: We are like to have troubles without, if we have not peace within, it will be very sad; we are like to lose much of Christs bodily

bodily
how
the
if w
ter,
dark
sad v

3.
the S
liman
into
eth t
taste
ly-G
give
worl
yet t
God
is be
ed;
herb
then
hath
We
is th
ny; t
of th
sees
are p
ther
may

bodily presence, I mean in his Ordinances; how many of those Messengers that represent the person of Christ, and stand in his stead? if we should not enjoy the other Comforter, our estates would be doleful; if we have darkness without, and darkness within, how sad will that darkness be!

3. Labour to get more communion from the Spirit of God. This will raise and sublimiate your natural comforts, and turn them into spiritual comforts. A man never relisheth these outward comforts, till he come to taste the ravishment and sweetness of the holy Ghost, till he taste the love of God; these give them a higher lustre than the men of the world; though they enjoy much comfort, yet they do not enjoy half that a child of God doth; the little that the righteous hath, is better than the great revenues of the wicked; to a child of God a dinner of green herbs is more savoury and pleasant to him, than the stalled Oxe, because a child of God hath better sauce with it.

Worldly men they smell to their flowers, it is the only godly man that sucks out the honey; that all things are given to him in love, out of this he sucks comfort: A gracious heart sees all these outward comforts, that they are purchased with the blood of Christ, and therefore these should do him good, and he may take comfort that he hopes for what he hath

hath not, as well as for what he may have; and he may take comfort in his condition, be it what it will, he sees all is for his good; such a one believeth what he readeth not: So he believeth Gods wayes are wayes of Truth, though some more sweet, and some more bitter.

4. Labour after communion with the Spirit in his comforting work, is another. This is the best preservative against all intanglements of sin whatsoever: It is a great hour of temptation, and if our comforts do not lie above the world, we shall be greatly insnared by the world. If a man eat sweet meats, he cannot relish ordinary food; so while these sweet comforts lie upon the soul, he cannot relish these ordinary things in the world: What, do you tempt me with these things, sayes a child of God? what are these to the comforts of the Holy Ghost? The heart of man will seek comfort one way or another; and if he hath it not from the Spirit of God, he will seek it some other way; if he hath not comfort from the Spirit of God, he will seek some sparks of his own kindling; rather than they will sit in darkness without comfort, they will light their candle at the Devils fire: And as he delivereth from temptation on the right, so he delivereth from temptation on the left hand; he that is filled with the comforts of the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, what are sufferings to such a man? he hath that within him that will carry him through all danger; here is that comfort, and that life by Christ, which may ease us in our greatest crosses; this will make a child of God speak of the sufferings of this world as a light matter. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, because in Heaven they had a better and more enduring substance, *Heb. 11. 35*. Some were tortured, receiving no deliverance, because in Heaven they had a better substance. Oh, if you would be kept from the snares of the world, let your comforts be above the power and danger of temptation from any thing here below.

3. By way of Direction. How shall we have communion, and act faith upon the holy Ghost as your Comforter? The holy Ghost is designed and appointed by God the Father to this Office: Now you know none love to be slighted in their Office; and if we do not act faith upon the holy Ghost, we slight his Office; therefore we should have recourse to him in a way of believing: As we should act faith upon Christ for the pardon of sin, so we should act faith upon the Holy Ghost, for a sence of that pardon.

The Spirit of Christ

2. Go often to Jesus Christ, and beg him, and beseech him to intreat the Father for you. Go to God the Father in the name of Christ, and beg it upon the account of Christs prayer and intercession, that he would send the Comforter ; and you have good argument to inforce the Petition, the very same as the Disciples, *That Christ would*, when he went away, *pray the Father, and he should send you another Comforter*. Christ tells them, that some there were that would kill them, and in so doing, think they did God good service ; therefore Christ, in compassion to them, in the state that he left them in, *prays the Father that he would send the Comforter*. So now we must go to God, those Ministers that were wont to comfort us, are now to be taken from us ; our *Barnabas's*, sons of consolation, their mouths are to be stopped, though Ordinances are now to be dammed up, the houses of God made places of defilement ; our Teachers are removed into corners, our Troubles increase, and we have none to tell us how long ; the light of our eyes, the comfort of our hearts, in respect of outward means, are going from us ; whether shall we go ? we want bread for our souls, we want cordials for our hearts, Blessed Saviour pity us ! and since thou wilt not come to us in thy own presence, as thy Embassadors, to come to us by thy Spirit, do now in Heaven as thou didst on earth, *Pray*
the

a Christians Comfort.

67

the Father for us; do not leave us as so many Orphans, without Father or Mother, but send thy Spirit to refresh our souls: See how we are hated and reviled, and we must suffer these things now, Let us have thy Spirit.

3. If you would have communion with the Spirit of Christ in his comforting work, *Take heed that you do not lay up your comforts in the creature.* This is for to seek for the living among the dead; those that rejoyce in the creature, rejoyce in a thing of nought; and you that have an interest in God, God will not take it at your hands, to seek it any where else, no, not in Ordinances; though God would have you to seek comfort in Ordinances, yet he would not have you to seek comfort from Ordinances.

4. Set down, and be much in duty, *Psal. 63. 5, 6. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.* If you look at the beginning of the *Psalms*, you shall find that this *Psalms* was penned when David was deprived of the Ordinances of God. Many a man complains that he lives uncomfortably, no wonder, when he little thinks on Christ.

The Spirit of Christ

5. Be much in the exercise of grace. *Then they walked in the fear of the Lord, when they walked in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.*

6. Take heed of quenching and grieving the Spirit, your Comforter, by neglecting his motions, or by acting any thing against the mind of the Spirit: Do not sin against him as your enlightning Spirit, that will hinder him as your Comforter.

I close with a word of Comfort to the people of God. If it be one of the great works of the Spirit of God, here is matter of great comfort to those that stick close to Jesus Christ.

1. Sure your comforts will be satisfying comforts, sufficient, because they are comforts of the Spirits working. The Lord Jesus hath promised to make up the want of his bodily presence, by sending his Spirit: He was now going from them, and tells them, *That he could not stay*; and this was sad newes to the Disciples, who were ready to break their hearts, and the best comfort that he could afford them, was to tell them, *That he would send the Comforter*. If Christ can comfort his people in the absence of himself, surely he can comfort them in the want of all other comforts that relate either to soul or body; and so in the want of mercies in the want of outward
Ordin-

Ordinances, he can comfort the soul. It is the Spirit of God that can comfort in the use of these ; and, if he will, he can do it in the want of them, he can comfort us in the wilderness, where no water is ; when he doth deny the means, he can comfort us without ; where he denies us the stream, he can make us drink out at the Fountain.

7. and Lastly, The people of God finde hereby, that their comforts are abiding. Your liberty, your friends ; Ah, Ordinances and Ministers may be taken from you ; your Ministers may be banish'd, your Ministers may be imprison'd ; but here is a *Comforter that abides for ever*. And though they may keep your Ministers out of the Pulpit, yet they shall not take the Comforter out of your hearts : So that when I shall not Preach any more to you, I shall pray the Father, that he would send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

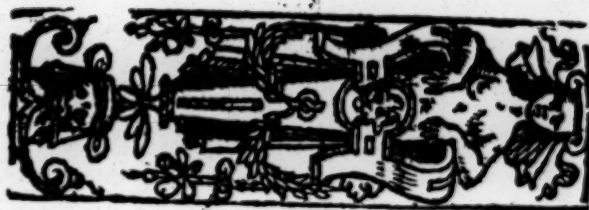
Mr.

N

Am



Rev



Mr. Bull of Newing-
ton-Green his Far-
well Sermon in the
Afternoon.

Acts 20. 32.

*And now Brethren, I commend you to
God, and to the word of his Grace,
who is able to build you up, and to
give you an inheritance among them
that are sanctified.*



He words are part of St. Pauls
Farwel-Sermon, or Discourse
to the Elders of the Church of
Ephesus, one of those famous
seven Churches of *Asia*, that
we read of in the Book of the
Revelations. It is not to be doubted, as Cal-

vin doth Comment upon the place, that though the Apostle speaks immediately to the Elders, yet doth comprehend the whole Church in the Speech.

Our holy Apostle had been a long time with the Church, preaching among them, taking pains with them, both in publick and private, as you may see in the 20. *ver.* and declares to them the whole Council of God, *ver.* 27. and now being called away, taken off by Divine Providence, by the will of his Master, the last and best office that he thought he could do for them, was to commit them to the care of God, and to leave them in his Arms, and to recommend them to his Grace.

It would be more then the time would permit, to look over the whole Apostles Sermon, which is partly Narrative, and partly Consolatory : Narrative, to put them in mind in what manner he had preached to them, from *ver.* 17. to *ver.* 27. And its partly Consolatory, from the 27. to the Text, wherein the Apostle could hold no longer, but his love constrains him, and makes him to break forth into this patheticall wish, or rather prayer, *And now Brethren, I commend you to his Grace.* As if he had said, I am just now going from you, not knowing that I shall see your face any more; now I am a
dying

dying man, as to my conversing with you any more ; now I am departing, this is the best Legacie I can bequeath unto you , *To commend you to God, and to his grace.* And he speaks to persons as standing in the same relation with God and Christ, and having the same Father, and the same elder Brother : As if he should have said , you are as dear to me as my own flesh, as if you were my brethren by Consanguinitie , and it is my sorrow that I must leave you ; but as it is my greatest grief to part with you, yet I must leave you ; and this is the comfort, that I shall leave you in safe hands, I do not leave you to the wide world, I do not leave you as Orphans without a Father, as sheep without a Shepherd, but *I commend you to God, and to his grace.*

O happy word ! Though I must leave you, yet I trust God, who is able, will keep you ; as God is present every where by his Essence , so by his gracious presence more especially God is present with his people. I commit you , I commend you to God, I commit you to his care, to his keeping ; so the word signifies, so *Ravanelus* interprets the words, I trust you with God, I leave you as a *depositum* in Gods hands , as a dying man leaves his children in a friends hands to look after them ; as Christ did his Mother in *Johns* hands, so the Apostle leaves the *Ephesians* in the hands of God, and to the word of his grace ;
that

that is, the Gospel that he had declared to them. The Word of God in Scripture is often called his grace, 2 Cor. 6. Ephes. 3. 5. because it is a Declaration of the free grace of God to poor souls, and because it is the Spirits Instrument to work grace in the hearts of sinners.

This is remarkable, that after the Apostle had recommended them to God, he adds one word, *of his grace*: He doth not think it enough to mention recommending them to God, but to the word of his grace. The Expression is not for *Euphaniae gratia*, it is no tautology, it is not for more then needs, but to shew how needful, & how necessary the word of Gods grace is, as well to the building up, as for the converting of poor sinners; and though God can build up a Saint immediately, yet ordinarily he doth it not but through the word of his grace, which is able to build you. Beza and Calvin refer this Clause to God, answering to that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 9, 18. *God is able to cause all grace to abound in you.* But Erasmus refers this word to the words of Gods grace, *which is able to build you up.* And this Construction is favoured by those two places of Scripture, and may very well be meant both in 2 Tim. 3. 15. Jam. 1. 21. both which places attribute to the Word of God, as this doth; and in the second place, *Receive*
with

with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. So that both these words may be referred to this Clause, *The Word of God*, and *The Word of his grace*; to God as the Principle, and to the Word of his grace, as the instrumental cause to build them up; as much as if he had said, *I commend you to the grace of God, which is able to build you up.* The Apostle tells them, that he left them to such a God, as through the Gospel was sufficient to build them up, till he brought them to the full fruition of the Saints in light. The Apostle commends this to his Church, that were ready to weep, and say at his departure, *O Paul! God hath made thee a happy Instrument of laying a good Foundation among us, of doing a great deal of good to our souls, and we may bless God that we ever saw thy face; but now, alas! thou art going from us, we are afraid all thy pains will come to nothing; we should hope, that if God had pleased to continue thee amongst us, then we should have been built up; and surely, if God had intended good to us, and brought us to Heaven at last, he would not have taken thee from us. No, sayes the Apostle, be not discouraged, though I leave you, yet I commit you to God, and to the word of his grace.* If I be here, it is God alone that must build you up; I am but a poor, weak instrument in the hand of God, and when I am gone, God can build you up by some means

or

or other, and carry you over, or thorow all oppositions, temptations, and discouragements; till he hath fitted you for himself, and given you an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified.

Thus you have the words explained in that familiar Paraphrase; and being thus opened, you may take notice that

The words hold forth the special care of this blessed Apostle of Jesus Christ, though he must leave them, yet he takes care to leave them in safe hands, that was able to give a good account of them: You have the Apostle making a deed of trust for the securement of the Saints at *Ephesus* after his departure; or if you will, you have the Apostles last Will and Testament.

1. You have the Person making over this Trust, *St. Paul*.

2. You have the Trust its self, and those were the Saints of *Ephesus*.

3. You have the Trustees, those to whom this trust is committed; and they are two-fold. 1. To God. 2. To the Word of his grace. 3. Here is the time of making this Test, *now I am leaving of you*. 4. Here is the commendation of the Trustee, from the power and ability of him to manage this trust, and this is expressed in two particulars.

1. He is able to build you up; and then

2. To give you an inheritance: As if he should

should have said, I will leave you with such who are able to build you up. I might raise a multitude of observations from the words: As first of all.

Doct. 1. *That it should be the care of a faithful Minister, when he is by the providence of God taken from a people, to recommend them to God, and to the Word of his grace.*

2. As it is the duty of a faithful Minister to do it, so it is his comfort that he may do it; that he may leave his people in the hand of God, who is able to build them up in grace.

3. It may be the comfort of any Church of Christ, that when they are deprived of faithful Ministers, that yet they are left in the hands of God.

4. Though God can by his infinite power perfect grace, and bring men to heaven without the use of means, yet we have no ground or warrant to expect one or other, but through the Word of Gods grace.

5. and lastly, Though there be a glorious inheritance purchased and prepared by Jesus Christ, yet it is to be expected by none but those that are built up and sanctified; Or thus,

None must look for an inheritance hereafter, but such as are born of the Spirit, and built up in grace.

I might speak to many more; but I shall gather all that I have said into this one general Proposition, which is this.

Dñs.

Dott. That the best Farwel that a Gospel-Minister can give to his people that he loves and labours amongst, when he by the providence of God is taken from them, is to commend them to the Gospel, and to the word of his grace.

Thus doth our holy Apostle when he was taken from his people, and left to preach to them no more, he recommends them to the hands of God. And thus doth a greater then St. Paul, even Jesus Christ himself, *The great Shepherd of the sheep*, as St. Peter calls him, when he was leaving the world, and could no longer preach to them, he commends them to God, *John 17. 11.* And now sayes Christ to his Father, *I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.* And in the 14th. *I have given them thy Word*, he commends them to God, and to the Word of his grace.

In the prosecution of this truth, I shall explain these particulars.

1. Shew you what it is in a Minister to commend his people to God,
2. What it is that he should recommend them to God for.

3. Why

3. Why he should be so careful to recommend them to God.

4. How he should recommend them to God.

Lastly, Apply.

First, It is to leave them in the hand of God, to give them up unto Gods care and keeping, as I shewed you in the opening of the words, to commend them unto God, is to do that for them effectually, which he would fain do Ministerially, if he had been suffered to continue among them. As when a dying Father, or Husband commends his wife and children to some surviving intimate friend; it is a leaving, a committing them to that friend, to deal, and to do that for them, which he would have done if he had lived.

Now let us consider what it is that a faithful Ministers Designs and endeavours are to do for that Congregation that is committed to his charge. These four things especially every faithful Minister endeavours to do while he is amongst his people.

1. Their conversion unto Sanctification.
2. Their building up, their Edification.
3. Their Protection and Preservation.
4. Their Comfort and Consolation.

First, Their Conversion and turning to God.

The Pastors Farwell to his people

God. This is that that a faithful Ministers heart is set upon, that he may convert poor souls that are in a sinful state ; that he may turn poor souls to God ; that by often preaching, and praying, and counsel, he may bring them into a state of salvation, *Rom. 10. 1.* The Apostle there speaks of the *Romans*, that they were the people of God in profession ; ah, but this was not enough, fain he would that they should be the people of God in truth ; this is the hearty desire of every faithful Minister, not onely to bring his people to the outward profession of godliness, but to the work and power of it in their hearts ; not onely to have the name of Christian, but Christianity its self ; and this is the end of all his studying, to get them to God by little and little, till Christ be formed in them, *Gal. 4. 11.* *My little children*, sayes the Apostle, &c. *St. Paul* travels in birth with the *Galatians* from a state of nature, to a state of grace ; he would get grace wrought in their hearts, he would get them ingrafted into Christ ; and this is the end of his commending them to God, which he would fain have done, if he might have been suffered to preach to them. This is the language of a Ministers heart ; Lord, thou knowest that it was the desire of my soul, that every one of this people should be made holy by the Word ; I would fain have begotten them by the Ministry to Je-
sus

sus Christ; but now by the providence of God I am taken off before my work is done; and thou seest yet there is a great many in the gaul of bitternefs, and in the bond of iniquitie, in a state of death, and I am now likely not to do any thing more: now it is my care, that those that belong to the election of grace, may be gathered home to thee.

2. To build them up in knowledge and faith. He endeavours that those that are already sanctified, may be further built up in their most holy faith, where there are the most eminent Saints, yet there is a great deal lacking. The Apostle gives great commendation of the *Thessalonians*, 1 Thes. 3. 10. They were a famous Church, and there were a great many eminent Christians, yet there was something lacking in their faith, and in their knowledge. Christ speaks to one of his most eminent Apostles, *Oh thou of little faith!* Though the Foundation-stone be laid, yet there is a superstructure behind, and this is the work of Christ, the building them up, *Ephes. 4. 12*. This is the end of every faithful Minister, to make his people meet for Heaven; he would be feeding of them, that they may grow to the full measure of the stature of Christ: And therefore every godly Minister desires that he may be the Finisher, as well as the Author (under

der God) of their faith, that they may be built up to Christs heavenly Kingdom.

3. A Ministers aims are, that his people may be kept from danger. The people of God, after they are effectually called, they are continually in danger, they are as a Lilly amongst thorns, as sheep among wolves, as a besieged Citie in the midst of her Enemies.

They have enemies without, and enemies within; Enemies without, the Devil is their adversary.

1. They are in danger, in respect of the Devil, who is a very potent Enemy, a roaring Lion, and a malicious Enemy, malicious against God; an industrious Enemy, he goes about, seeking whom he may devour; he compasseth the Earth, to do what he can to keep souls from Christ; he is a subtil enemy, that hath his Stratagems to catch and insnare poor souls. Now it is the endeavour of every true Minister of Jesus Christ, to secure his people by his counsel, and his prayers; for we are not ignorant of his devices, 2 Cor. 2. 11. As if he should say, I have most experience of the Devils subtilty, Satan sets to oppose them most; and this is one thing, to rob Ministers of their mediation, of their prayer; and therefore it is the design of Ministers to strengthen their people

in recommending them to God.

99

people, in regard of Satans temptations.

2. They are in danger in respect of Seducers, that lie in wait to deceive.

3. They are in danger by the world, lest they should be frightened by its opposition.

4. They are in danger by their corrupt lusts, that war against their souls: Therefore every faithful Minister warns his people of those, that their souls may be secured; this being that that a faithful Minister would do among his people while he is with them; when he is taken from them, he commits them to God to be secured from all danger, as Christ in that place before, *Father, keep them in thy own hands.*

Lastly, Every faithful Minister seeks the comfort and consolation of his people. It is their desire to comfort the feeble hands; they are not Masters of your grace, but Helpers of your joy, 2 Cor. 4. 21: Where the Gospel appears in power, many will stand in need of comfort, under doubts, fears, and afflictions; and this is the desire of every faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, in their departure from their people, to support the weak, to resolve the doubted, to succour the tempted; and when he is taken from them, and can contribute little to this work, he re-

The Pastors Farwell to his people

1. commends them to God. A departing Minister may say to his people, If God has made me an instrument of speaking comfort to your souls, you have cause to bless God for it. Now I can do no more, I must recommend you to God, whom (I hope) will be the God of your comfort when I am gone.

2. This is the best Office that a Minister can do for his people when he is taken from them; and that whether we look upon Minister or people, certainly it is the best office that a Minister can do for his people, *To commend them to God.*

1. God is omnipotently, infinitely able.
2. God is gracious and faithful, therefore willing to do it.

First, God is infinitely able to manage this trust, he is God all-sufficient, *Gen. 17. 1.* sufficient to make himself happy much more to make his people happy.

1. God is all in all in the enjoyment of mercie.
2. God is all in all in the want of mercie.

First, He is all in all in the enjoyment of mercy. When a people have a faithful Minister placed over them by the providence of God, he can do nothing of himself, *2 Cor.*

3. 6. Our Preaching is from the assistance of God; and when we have done all, we cannot make this effectual, we cannot give the success; *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but its God that must give the increase,* 1 Cor. 3. 6. Why do you keep such a stir? one would have this Minister, another that; one would have *Paul*, another would have *Apollos*, another *Cephas*; are they not the Ministers of God, by whom you have believed? Our profit depends not upon the parts and gifts of a creature, but upon the blessing of God; it is God that must put this heavenly Treasure into the heart, and it is God that must disperse it at last for the good and benefit of his people. The most eloquent *Apollos* cannot persuade obstinate sinners to lay hold upon the Gospel; they may speak to the ear, but it is God that must carry the word to the heart, either for Conviction or Conversion.

Secondly, God is all in all in the want of means. Let the instrument be never so weak; if it be in the hand of God, it shall prove effectual: God can make a poor Fisherman instrumental to catch three thousand souls at one time; and God chooses to do his work by weak instruments; that the praise may be of God: It is not the Ministers parts or gifts, but onely the power of God that strengthens the soul, and sanctifies, and builds them up,

The Pastors Farwel to a people

and comforts them. God is able to convert all unconverted sinners in a Congregation; God can say, Ephata, Be opened.

2. God is able to build up those that are converted, God is able to make all grace abound, 2 Cor. 9. 8. Those that have little grace, God is able to make it increase; God is the God of all grace, God can make every Saint perfect, entire, lacking nothing; he can fill all the void places of the heart.

3. God can keep us in all trials and troubles; God can keep up his people in the midst of Apostacie, Matth. 16. 13. *The gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.* God can keep them, that all the power of Hell shall not hurt them.

4. God is able to comfort the most disconsolate soul. Ministers may speak comfortable words, but they cannot speak them further then to the ear; but God can speak them to the heart; *I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak to the heart.* God can comfort the poor soul, let the case be never so sad, 2 Cor. 1. 4.

2. As God is infinitely able, so he is infinitely gracious, and faithful. See his Name in Exod. 34. *Full of power, and tender mercy* Is not God willing for the conversion of poor sinners.

sinners, willing as Ministers? yea, a thousand, and ten thousand times more. Hear how pathetically God speaks, *Turn ye, why will ye die, hear, and live.* He calls upon all men every where to repent.

Secondly, God doth not onely desire it, but purpose it, and resolves. God that hath begun a good work, he will finish it; and so for their preservation, he hath said, *That the gates of Hell shall never prevail against them. Of all thou hast given me I have lost none,* Joh. 17: 11. Though God may suffer his people to be led away for a time, yet they shall be brought back again, and shall be kept through the power of God unto salvation; *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle which God hath spoken.*

How willing is God to comfort all his comfortless ones? what Mother can be more pitifull to her sick child, then God is to them that are under affliction: *Though a Mother forget her sucking child, yet God cannot forget his people.* And then he is the Father of all comfort, and there are many gracious promises God hath made to this purpose, that they may be as so many *Aqua vite* pledges of Consolation to his people: So that this will appear, That it is the best Office of a Minister, both to Minister and people, *To commend them to God.*

1. To Ministers, it is the highest expressi-

on of their love ; what greater testimonyo their love can they shew to their people, to do all that for them , that he would willingly have done , and ten thousand times more ? Is it not an expreſſion of love from a dying Father to his children, Dear children, I am now dying, I can provide for you no more, I ſhall leave you ſuch a friend that ſhall provide for you in a more abundant meaſure then if I had been with you. It is the beſt demonſtration of their faith.

1. That he will not leave them to the wide world ; and then

2. He will not take any one , he will truſt his people with none but God, who is able and willing to give account of them.

3. It is the greateſt ſatiſfaction to his heart. A Miniſters leaving his people can never be ſatiſfied in his own breaſt , that he ſhould leave them, and commit them, and not to know to whom ; but when he knows with whom he hath committed them, when he hath delivered them over to God, that firſt committed them to him, this is a great quietment and ſatiſfaction to a Miniſters ſpirit : Every Miniſter takes a care of ſouls ; God layes the people as a *depoſitum*, and will require on account of them at the laſt day. Now when a Miniſter is taken from his people, he cannot be ſatiſfied, till he hath delivered back his truſt to God, Lord, here they are, and while I was with them I did what I could,
but

but now I am taken from them, here I surrender them back into thy hand; when I was in the world, I kept them in thy Name: And so it is best for the people to be left such a one who will keep them in all their dangers, and comfort them in all afflictions.

3. How should a people be commended to God?

1. By Exhortation.
2. By Prayer.

First, by Exhortation. Thus the Apostle before and after my Text. And then by Prayer, for so doth St. Paul. Calvin looks upon these words as a prayer brought in, *Always making mention of you in my prayers*, Rom. 1. 19. *Phil.* 1. 4. *Col.* 1. 3.

And I trust that I shall not only now, at this solemn parture, but as long as I live, still recommend you into the hands of God; though I shall not preach to you, yet I still shall make mention of you in my prayers, that God would stablish, and comfort, and preserve you to his heavenly Kingdom.

4. Why doth the Apostle commend them to the Word of his grace? For these two Reasons.

First, Because all the good that any people

ple can look for, is from God ; it is declared and laid up in the Promises, and in the Gospel ; there is the Treasure of God, it is in the Gospel: *The grace of God, which hath appeared to all men, bringeth salvation, Tit. 2. 11.* We could never have known the glorious mysteries of Salvation, had it not been for the grace of God ; we could never have expected good, but from the Gospel, that is the great *Magna Charta* , wherein God hath made over whatsoever concerns the eternal good of his people : We have nothing to shew for grace, and comfort , and heaven, and glory, but his Gospel, that is the great deed of gift that God hath given to his people ; poor sinners might look a Saviour, if the word of God had not revealed it ; those people would have no ground to expect salvation, if God had not declared it in his Gospel to bestow it upon them.

2. The Gospel is the onely instrument by which God brings, and conveys all that good to the soul that it stands in need of, all spiritual and temporal good that accompanies Salvation.

God works nothing immediately upon the soul, but by the Gospel.

First, If any soul be converted to God, it is by the grace of God: And as Conversion, so Sanctification, that is effected by the word
of

of God; so likewise in Edification, Salvation, and Preservation.

Use. I come now to the Application. It may be I have been too long already; but God knows that it may be the last time that I may trespass in this kind; and I have the Apostles Example, who preached at *Troas* till midnight; but I promise to have done in a great deal less time.

Use and
Applica.

Use. In the Application I shall in the Apostles Example, *Commend you to the grace of God.*

My Brethren, and dearly Beloved, and longed for, now God by his providence is taking me away from you, in the exercising of my publike Ministry, *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.*

This I shall do, First, by exhorting and counsel; and then by prayer.

First, By way of Exhortation.

Use of
Exhort.

1. In reference to God; and then
2. In reference to the word of his grace.

First of all, my Exhortation in reference to God, is, that you would commit yourselves to God: If it should be so much a Ministers care to commend his people to God,
its

its good reason they should commend themselves.

1. All a Ministers commending you to God, will be to no purpose, if you do not commit your selves. *I shall alwayes make mention of you in my prayers, as long as God shall continue me in this valley of tears ; I will pray that God should build you up, and sanctifie you ; I shall pray for you, but God will not hear my prayers, if you do not hearken to my counsel, To commit your selves to God.*

2. Consider, If you can so commit your selves to God, as to get God to take charge of you, you are made for ever.

1. God will be an All-sufficient God ; in stead of all thy friends in the world, you shall not need any that shall provide for you to protect you ; God will be All in All, in stead of Father, in stead of Mother, Houses, Lands, Relations ; God will be better to you then ten Husbands, then ten Ministers ; Ah, better then ten Thousand Worlds.

God can sweeten all your enjoyments, God can provide for you, and make you happy in the midst of the wants of creature-comforts ; God is a Sun and a Shield, he will give grace and glory, *And no good thing*

thing will be withhold from them that fear him.

God contains all in himself *Eminent* ; get God, and you get all : Let the World frown or smile , let it turn upside down, though the Mountains be thrown into the midst of the Sea, though the World be set on fire , yet a Soul that is in Gods keeping is happy : *God is a present help in time of trouble.*

2. As God is an All-sufficient friend, so he is a firm and a fast friend to them, *My Father and Mother forsook me, then the Lord took me up*, Psal. 27. 10. My flesh and my heart fails, but God fails me not ; though my Minister and my friends leave me, yet God will not leave me ; he is engaged by his own promise, truth, and faithfulness, *I will never, never, never, &c. leave thee nor forsake thee.*

If you do not forsake God, God will never forsake you ; if once you have so committed your selves to God, as God accepts the charge, he hath undertaken that you shall never depart from him : It is part of the Covenant , and he is engaged to all the Relations wherein he stands to his people, as a Husband, as a Father, as a Master.

But

The Pastor's Farewell to a people

But you will say, How shall we commit our selves to God, that God may have a charge of us? I will give you one direction for all.

1. Take God to be your God, and give up your selves to be his people; if you will, before you and I part, heartily and unreservedly give up your selves to God, to be his people, it will be the comfortablest day that ever I saw, though in other respects it may be the saddest; as certainly God is your God, so certainly he will keep you; if you will avouch your selves to be Gods, I will avouch God to be yours.

1. You must take God to be the portion of your souls inheritance, lay up all your happiness in God; for if you choose any thing else for your happiness but God, God will have nothing to do with you, God will be All or nothing: Your hearts must say as *Dauids*, *Lord thou art my portion; whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* He accounted all nothing for God, God was his happiness, God was his portion, God was his All in All.

2. You must make God the center of all your love and delight; God will have all from you, or nothing; you must not divide your affection between God and the world,
you

you must love nothing in comparison of him; love nothing but in subordination to him; as you would have God to be wholly yours, so you must be wholly his.

3. You must take God to be the strength and shield of your hearts; if you would have God to take care of you, so you must cast your care upon God; if you place your hope any where else, there will be no sure hold, the Anchor of your hope must be cast no where else; if you lay your burden any where else, God will not lend you a finger to help you; but if you place your hope in God, God will help you; your extremitie shall be his opportunity.

4. You must take God to be the guide of your hearts; if you would have the privilege of Gods guard, you must keep in Gods way; keep in Gods way, and you will be sure of Gods protection; do you keep Gods precepts, and God will keep your person; do what God commands, and avoid what God forbids, and then you need not fear what will become of you.

Let the World frown, and Friends forsake you, resolve that you will follow God where-soever he leads you, then he will be your God all your daies, and he will guide you here by his counsel, till at last he bring you

to

The Pastors Farwell to his people;

to his glory: And this leads me to the second Exhortation, in respect to the Gospel.

Secondly Brethren, *I commend you to the word of Gods grace.* I commend you to the Precepts of God, to be obeyed by them, I commend you to the Promises of God, to be believed by you.

1. Keep them, and hold them fast carefully; it is your Treasure, it is your Life; keep it, and it will keep you, it is all that you can shew for Heaven: I leave it as a *Depositum*, if you part with it, take heed how you will answer it at the last day; it is the Talent which God hath committed to you, for which you will be commended for keeping at the great day. Hold fast the Word of Gods grace, there is old tugging by the Devil and his instruments, either to pull you from the Word, or the Word from you. Let go any thing rather than the Gospel, let your Friends, your Estates, your Lives, rather than let go the Gospel.

Study Gods Word, do not keep them by for no purpose: *Search the Scriptures, for in them you hope for eternal life.* There's the Pearl of great price, there is Direction, there is Comfort; this Book of God will make you wise unto Salvation.



If

If you never hear Sermon more, you have enough by the use of the Bible to carry you to Heaven; There's Divinitie, there is holiness and heaven almost in every syllable, when you cannot have it preached to you. Be much in the studie of it.

Then practice it conscionably: Be not only hearers, but doers of it; let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel. It was the Apostles advice to the *Philippians*, and its mine to you, *Let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel*. Let your conversation become the Precepts, the Priviledges, the Promises of the Gospel. Having then thus commended you to God, give me leave before we part, to commend God and his Gospel to you.

1. Make it your daily business to walk with God, make him the companion of your lives; converse with God every day in the inward of your hearts: He that is a stranger with God, God will soon be a stranger to him; and if you neglect God one day, you may be to seek him when you may most need him.

2. Live in the daily exercise of grace and godliness.

1. Live in the continual exercise of Faith, live by it, you have need of the exercise of that grace every day; you can as well live without food, as live without faith; it is that grace which feeds upon Christ.

H

2. Be

2. Be much in the exercise of the fear of the Lord all the day long ; be afraid to sin against God ; in the secret of your souls mind his presence, in all places, in all company, in all businesses.

3. Be much in the exercise of Humilitie ; live humbly, and think better of others then your selves : Humilitie will exceedingly adorn your profession.

4. Be much in the exercise of Repentance. Be frequent and constant in prayer, *Pray continually* ; do it spiritually, and do it exactly, as to the season of it.

5. *Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Whatever you do for God, do it with all your might ; do not put off God with the skin, but give him the marrow.

6. Be careful, not only to keep up secret, but Familie-worship ; the less preaching there is in publick, the more catechising and instructing there should be in private. I know no more likely means, then the setting up the worship of God in private families.

7. Prize the Sabbath ; be strict and exact in the observation of the Lords day. I have shewed you many times wherein the spiritual observation of it doth consist ; it is your seed-time, your market-day ; it is a sign you shall one day celebrate an everlasting Sabbath with God in the highest Heavens.

8. Be stedfast in the waies of God in a back-sliding Age : Keep your ground, while others fall

fall away, stand fast in faith; be not ashamed to own Christ before all the world; reckon upon the reproaches of Christ, and count them greater riches then the Treasures in Egypt. Do not place Religion in a few shadows, when the substance is neglected; do not think that God will be put off with the skin without the substance; and by your holy conversation labour to put to silence the foolishness and ignorance of wicked men, that men may have nothing to accuse you but in the matters of Jesus Christ, that you may cut off occasion from them that seek occasion. Let no reproach make you lay aside holiness, and say, *If this be to be vile, I will be vile still.* And love all those that have been instrumental for your spiritual comfort.

Forget not to contribute to the necessities of the poor Saints; think that God hath given you your Estates for such a time as this, for this is acceptable to God; *Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despightfully use you, so shall you heap coals of fire upon their heads; when you are reviled, revile not again.* Do your dutie to your Superiours, to those that God hath set over you, and so carry your selves as it was in the case of Daniel, that they may finde nothing against you save in the matter of your God. In all things let your conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *That I may rejoyce in the day of the Lord Jesus, that we have not run in vain, and laboured in vain.*

And labour to keep up that Christian love, which in this place hath been more eminent then any where I know. I would preach St. Johns Doctrine, *Little children, love one another*: And that my expression may be pathetical, I shall speak it in the words of the Apostle. in *Phil. 2. 1, 2.* *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

I now have but a word more, speaking of yours and mine own comfort under this sad Dispensation.

1. It is a Ministers comfort, that when he is taken from his people, he can yet commend them to God, and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

And truly, my dearly beloved in the Lord, this is my great work now, when I am a dying to you as to my publick Preaching: My Beloved, I am very sensible that it is a very sad and solemn thing for a Minister to be rent from a people that he loves as his his own soul, that he hath laboured among; for to bid adieu to these solemn meetings, wherein I have preached to you, wherein we have mingled our sighs and our tears before the Lord, wherein we have rejoyced and sat down together before the Lord at his Table, now to think that

I must

I must minister with you and for you no more in these Ordinances, methinks it is a heart-breaking consideration; to think that I am now dying in this Congregation; to think that I am now dying whilst I am preaching; yet this is my comfort under these sad thoughts, that I can commit you to God, and to the Word of his grace; to one that is able to keep you, and to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are justified. Like a dying Father, I can commend you to the care of such a Friend, infinitely able to supply all that I could not do for you.

It is the comfort of a dying Father, when he sees his children weeping round about him, that he can commend them to a faithful friend, willing to do that for them that he desired to do, and a thousand times more.

I would hope that I have some children that I have begotten to Christ by my Ministry, towards whom my bowels yearn; but this is my comfort, that I can put them into the arms of their and my heavenly Father, of their and my blessed Redeemer, to be kept by the power of God.

There are many poor souls that are yet in the gaul of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; and if the Lord had seen good, I would fain have seen of the travel of my soul in their salvation; but I can commend them to God, who knows them who belong to his
Ele.

The Pastors Farwel to a people

Election, he can either restore me, or can do it by another hand ; and you that are in any measure grown in grace, I would be willing to be helpful to your joy, and instrumental to your comfort ; but *I commend you to God, who is able to give all grace to you, and to keep you stedfast.*

It will be some alleviation of sorrow, that though I must leave you, and die to you as to your publick Ministry, yet I hope I may a while go up and down, and converse with you, to be among you. The Lord grant this favour, that he may behold your stedfastness.

2. This may be your comfort as well as mine ; this may be the comfort of all those poor Congregations that are like to be made Widows by the Metaphorical death of their Guides and Pastors ; but I leave you into the hands of all grace and of all comfort.

This is a black day upon *Israel*, when so many faithful Ministers are slain at one blow ; this is a day of gloominess and darkness in many Congregations, for so many Ministers to be beheaded in one day !

What hath *England* committed ? is it not some High Treason ? If we look to the cause of it, why so many Ministers are as dead in one

one day, as so many children without a Father.

And if we look upon the cause, what hath caused God thus to deal with us, we must complain, Oh ! our unfruitfulness ! our fearful unthankfulness under the mercies of God ! This will be the *Emphasis* and sting of our grief; and this should be the matter of our grief.

And then, if we consider the sad Prognostick, what it doth seem to foretel : It is a sign, that when God layes aside so many faithful Ministers, of some scourge and calamitie that is coming upon us.

But you that can lament this Judgement, you that can lament the sad deprivation of these powerful Ordinances, Remember, that though your Minister be dead, God can raise you up others in their stead ; and where the way of instruments are wanting, he can do it without them ; and those that are begot in Christ, shall be preserved ; and those that are yet unbrought in, who belong to the Election of Grace, shall in Gods due time have the effectual work of the Spirit wrought upon their Souls : *For he is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among them that are sanctified.*

And

The Pastors Farewel to a people

And though I take this solemn leave of you, as to this publick Exercise, yet if the Lord shall open the door, and take off those bands of Death that the Law hath laid upon my Ministry in regard of Conscience, who cannot conform, for which our publick Ministry is suspended, I shall cheerfully and willingly return to you in this place.

But now, though your dying Minister, in respect to the Exercise of his publick Ministry, is leaving of you, yet I committ you into a safe hand, *I commend you to God, and to his Grace. Amen.*



Mr

Pr
lac
wh
th
'fin



Mr. Pledger's farewel Sermon.

Revel. 2. 9, 10.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten dayes: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.



IN the former verse you have the superscription and description of this Epistle: the superscription by the mouth and hand of *John*, to the Angel of the Church of *Smyrna* (that is) the ministry of the Gospel, or the Colledge of Presbyters: As the whole Tribe of *Levi* in *Malachy* is called *the Angel of the Lord*: so here, the whole Tribe and office of the Ministry is called the Angel: Angel is not a term that signifies a single person, but a name of Office. Then for

L

the

146 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

the Description (*These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive*) He is described by his eternity, by his suffering, and by his reviving: I shall not speak of this, nor of the verses following the Text. I shall speak of the Inscription or Narration of the Epistle in these two verses, wherein you have, 1. A Commendation: 2. An Admonition, a piece of heavenly Counsel.

1. You have a Commendation, *I know thy works, &c.* I like it well the pains thou takest in my service for my servants sake; I know how thou hast suffered: I take all well, I consider all the reproaches that are vomited out against thee.

2. Then you have the Counsel. 1. Fear none of these things. 2. The Arguments to set it on.

1. 'Tis the Devil that shall trouble you: he is the prime Agent, he that never took a good cause: Thou hast certainly God for thee if thou hast the Devil against thee.

2. This Devil shall be checked and restrained.

1. As to the number of them he shall deal withall: [*The devil shall cast some of you into prison*] He aims at all, but he shall come short of many.

2. In

Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon. 147

2. In respect of the kind of the Affliction. [*Cast some into prison*] He aims at our souls, to disturb the peace of them, to cast us into hell, I but it shall be but into prison.

3. For the design of this Affliction [*Not for destruction, but to try us*] It shall not be as wood in the fire, to be consumed: but as gold in the fire, to be tried.

4. For the term of duration, it shall not be for ever [*But for ten dayes*] for a time, for a set time, for a short time; perhaps thou shalt lose thy life; But be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Before I go out I shall endeavour to shine in the whole light of this Text in these six or seven Propositions.

Pro. 1.

First, Jesus Christ takes notice of all the work, and trouble, and losses that we endure for him. There cannot be a godly word spoken but the Lord hears it, takes notice of it; not a day of humiliation, not a tear, not a prayer, not a sigh, not a cup of cold water, but the Lord sets it down: *Item* at such a time thou didst lose such a thing, hazard such a concernment. Now this knowledge lies in two things. 1. It implies an Approbation. 2. A Recompence: *I know what thou doest, what thou sufferest*, so as to approve it, and so as to recompence it. Now then if God

148 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

takes notice of what we do and suffer for his Name, then either we must say he hath not good enough, or not time enough to bestow that good upon us, or not faithfulness enough to performe his promise, before we can be moved from his service.

Pro. 2.

Secondly, I observe. Believers in their poorest condition, when they have lost all, they are rich: *I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.* The only wise man is the only rich man (so saith the Philosopher) but the Believer is the rich man (so saith the Wisdom of God in the Text.) And the riches of a Believer lies in five things.

1. In his interest, he hath a God for his portion: Faith doth unite and implant into the Lord Jesus Christ; so that we are become spiritually rich to the utmost degree of happiness: saith David, *The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, I have a goodly heritage.* All that rich Love of God, which is stronger then death it self: a rich Covenant of grace shines in the Promises as so many pearls; he will not withhold any thing that is good, nor suffer any thing that is evil to fall upon us, that shall not turn to good. How rich are they that are rich in God?

2. Believers must needs be rich in their Relations: *Our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:* They that are married
to

Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon. 149

to Christ, and have an interest in him, they must certainly contract very honourable Allies, the Brother of Jesus Christ, a Member of Christ: she that marries a Prince or King, is a Queen: What title of honour shall we give to one that is espoused to Jesus Christ?

3. The Believer is honourable in his possessions: To name but two, possession of Grace, possession of Peace: Grace and Peace, there is your riches; so the Lord salutes you in his Word, the least drachm of grace is more than all the world: and this is the character of one that hungers and thirsts after Christ. And then for comforts which are grounded upon grace and the work of grace: for the spring of grace is a spring of joy: *In the world you shall have trouble, but in me peace: and in the midst of my troubled thoughts (saith David) thy comforts delight my soul.*

4. A Believer is rich in regard of his expectation, that reversion, that blessed hope that is reserved for him. A Believer his character is, to long and look for the appearance of Christ: The Believer is rich in the everlasting Kingdom of glory.

5. A Believer is rich in the things of this life: he can live above these things, he can be content without them: contentment is your riches; you shall want nothing that is good; why then have we not enough? and if we have enough, why do we not see our riches? Because God doth not

150 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

shake down the Acorns from the tree of common Providence, which he does to the heads of the world, but feeds us with childrens bread, shall we therefore repine? Let us see our riches even in the things of this life. He that believes on Christ, is in such a condition as can know no want: He that is not in Christ, cannot be rich: He that is in Christ, cannot be poor. Judge not of his condition by what he appears outwardly. A Believer is worth as much as the Promises come to, which are his Charter; as much as the Kingdome of Heaven comes to, which is his reversion.

Pro. 3.

Christ takes notice of all the reproaches and blasphemies of his Adversaries: *I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan.* Christ counts himself reproached when his servants and wayes are reproached: *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* A Christian doth quarter Armes with Christ: therefore all the reproaches of the black mouths, they are especially taken notice of by Jesus Christ. There is not a word they can speak, but is presently recorded among the *memorandums* of Jesus Christ. Repent, if it be possible: the word in thy tongue, the thought in thy mind may be forgiven; I say, if it be possible, though a malicious scoffer does seldom return.

Pro.

Pro. 4.

Whatever the Children of God suffer at any time before the Grave, they must suffer still [*I know thy works, and Tribulation (nay yet the wind is not over) in the next verse thou shalt suffer*] After great expences of blood and treasure, still more heavy calamities: the water of Tribulation doth rise higher and higher till the believer resists unto blood striving against sin: you must expect it, you must go with your lives in your hands resolving upon the greatest trouble, to wade through a deep flood of calamities, not one peice of the Cross excepted.

Pro. 5.

Christ usually gives notice to his people in their sufferings, he tells us before hand. So *Joh. 16. 7. Mat. 24. 9. Acts, 9. 16.* There never did befall any great tryal, but the Church of God had notice of it: *Abraham* had notice of *Sodom's* destruction: *Noah* had notice of the old worlds destruction: *Abraham* again had notice of the ruin of *Egypt*: So the Anti-Christian trouble must come upon the Church, rise higher and higher, specially in the last dayes: they are set down exactly in the book of the *Revellations*: And the Reasons are,

1. That Gods people may not be offended when troubles come, *Joh. 16. 1. I told you that*

152 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

you might not be offended. Look for them that you may not be terrified by reason of the unexpectedness of them.

2. That he might convince us that there is nothing befalls us without his privity: he that foresees them he must needs see them; he that forecasts them, he must needs have the ordering of them; *not a hair of your heads falls to the ground without his Council, without his hand.*

3. That we might provide for them: *know you not the coming of the Son of Man?* When Christ comes with notable mercies, usually he sends his harbingers; we must therefore be as Noah: being warned of God, believing his word, he was moved with fear and built an Ark.

Pro. 6.

What ever troubles come upon the people of God, they have no cause to fear: *fear none of these things thou shalt suffer: be careful for nothing* (it's very comprehensive) there is a fear that we cannot be without, and there is a fear we may not admit: A fear there is of dependance, this furthers our preparation, prayer, renouncing our selves, flying to the Lord Jesus under his wings: that's a blessed fear of trouble that makes us to come neerer to God: But then there's a fear of dispondency, Apostasie, a fear of distraction, so as to be dismayed, discouraged. There's no ground of slavish fear as to God; no ground of
a fatal

Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon. 153

a fatal fear of man, of any thing that man can do to us : And the Reason is,

1. All our sufferings are ordered by a Father: 'tis the potion that thy Father gives thee to drink: what ever bitter ingredient there is in it, still it's of thy Fathers procuring : why wilt thou suspect it to be poyson and afraid of it ? no, be encouraged.

2. Fear not : Christ stands by thee in all thy sufferings : The Angel stood by Christ in his Agony to comfort him : but Christ stands by us in our Agony, in our contending for the Faith : fear not (saith God) *O worm Jacob, I will be with thee* : He is alwayes with us, though sometimes as to sense 'tis otherwise : nay if Christ be neerer to us at any time, tis when trouble is most neer us. (*O Lord be not far off, for trouble is neer, saith the Psalmist*) That trouble is blessed that engages God to be neerer to us, that engages us to come neerer to God.

3. Fear not what ever tis that we suffer: there shall be sufficient strength given to bear it, to go through it: God will never lay more upon thee then he will enable thee to bear: and if thy strength be increased proportionably, it is all one for thee to lift a pound weight, and to lift a hundred pound weight.

4. Fear not any of these sufferings, because none of them shall hurt thee : God hath said he will

154 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

will stave off all evil from thee (*no evil shall come nigh thy dwelling*) and he that feares the Lord shall not be visited of any evil, Pro. 19. 23. No hurt shall come, nothing shall come to thee amiss (that is) as to thy Soul, and the soul is the man: there shall be no impairing to thy soul, to thy best interest: thou shalt lose nothing but that thou canst not keep, nothing that enters into the other world to make up thy happiness, thou shalt lose nothing to do thee good; no loss of communion with God, no loss of grace, peace and comfort; thy interest shall not be shaken, thy Communion shall not be diminished.

But why do I speak of no hurt? there shall come a great deal of good by these troubles. When God calls thee to suffer, and thou wilt put him off with doing, make it up that way, God loses by it, and thou dost lose that thou dost: but if you would buckle your self to that service God calls for; active when 'tis active; passive when 'tis passive, this is that peice of godliness that is *great gain*. Thou wilt either live or dye, and shalt gain both wayes; if thou livest, thy Graces shall be better, the spirit of God shall rest upon thee; if thou dye, thy glory which is weighty, shall be double; the weightier the Cross, the weightier the Crown; be content to go as Christ did from the Cross to the Crown. Let us strive against our carnal lusts, those few things that are ready to choak our faith, disparage God, and cut the Sinews of our endeavour to any service God calls us to.

1. Consider our troubles are like to be great: here is the Symptoms of Gods displeasure upon us, here is the pouring out of such a providence among us, as is usually attended with destructive Judgments. *Sodom's* calamity was coming when one *Lot* was discharged: *Germany's* calamity was coming when one *Luther* was taken away; Lord then what woe is this to sleep away so many faithful, painful labourers at once! but its our Duty to suffer patiently and not complain.

2. As our troubles must be great, so, many will fear, and in fearing faint; we see it come to pass, and you will find it more and more: There are those that run with the Foot-men, that will not keep pace with the Horse-men, that may be left behind and be trod under Foot: our troubles are likely to arise according to all we can learn from Scripture and providence, and very many there be that will shrink.

3. Consider 'tis a very difficult thing to stand stedfast in a day of evil: you cannot name any of Gods Children, but when they have indeed come to it, their carnal fears have been working so as *their feet have almost slipt*, they have been almost gone, but that for the promise of God, that he would lay no more upon them then he would enable them to bear.

156 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

O but you will say, What will become of the publique interest, of the name and Church of God? and what shall become of my private interest?

I answer, you have no ground of fear (according to Scripture) in either of these respects.

First as to the publique name of God, the interest of his Church, of his truth, of righteousness, of a real Reformation, interest of our prayers and hopes, be not afraid.

1. God bears a dear respect unto his people: they are represented in Scripture by all names that may import dearness & nearness unto him: the interest of his glory is bound up in his people: he calls *Israel his Glory*: We know the interest of men is that which moves the world: but the interest of God, of his Glory, no doubt will be the ground of safety and security unto us, even till God take us to Heaven. For the interest of Gods Justice, God made Hell; and for the interest of his mercy and grace he gave Jesus Christ to die, to take effect here amongst the Children of men; do you think God will forget his interest?

2. Remember Gods wayes are in the deep: you cannot tell what God is doing; when you think thoughts of destruction and confusion, my thoughts towards you saith God, are thoughts of peace: And truly God he does not save a Soul,
nor

nor does not promote the Salvation of his Church in any eminent degree, but it is in a way that is cross and contrary to the sense and expectation of flesh and blood: in so much you know the darkness of our condition has been the entrance upon deliverance; as just before the day dawns, its the darkest of the night; when God looked and there was none to help them, saies he, my arm brought salvation.

Thus it is with you that are effectually called: you have received the sentence of death; the entrance upon your deliverance, is the darkest time of your condition.

3. God can do great things. *Joel. 2. fear not, thy God O Syon can do great things.* Tis the disparagment that we offer to God, we ascribe more to the Creature then we do to God: when we give way to carnal fear; fear not what man can do, because of the power of God which was his shield and buckler; Is any thing too hard, too heavy for God? and when God does great things, he usually goes on to do greater; though he may seem to suffer his work to be thrown back to confusion, and his people may be ready to say we thought he had redeemed *Israel*, that degree of Reformation shall not be lost. You know in *Luthers* time, take any special degree of Reformation in the Church, and it seemed to be opposed by the Gates of Hell: when it was brought upon the stage to any hopefull degree, then it was taken as it were utterly out of sight for a while: but it was never lost: thus God is but making

158 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

making way for his own glory to appear in these great works.

O but you will say what shall become of my particular? It is enough God hath promised that we shall not want any thing that is truly good, and that nothing that is evil shall fall upon us and lie upon us: though we do not see deliverance, it shall be: whatever our sad thoughts and tremblings of heart may be, yet give God the Glory of his word: Take these few Directions.

1. Strive to strengthen thy Faith. Faith is that which layes hold on Christ: and Christ is your strength: therefore faith is said to do that which Christ does: let every day drive thee to a renewed act of Faith: Take heed, be not shaken in the faith of the Cause, be not shaken in the faith of Christ (*fides causæ, fides Christi*) Be not shaken upon the Cause, which upon utmost examination we find to be according to the word, hold that: *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but not one jot and tittle of this Cause.* And then do not shake in the Faith of Christ, that is, in your laying hold, in your applying your selves to him, in your resting and settling upon him; beg of God to strengthen your faith.

2. Get more Self-denial: we must forsake all, we must not except any thing. A man would part with his life as easily as with a pin off

off his sleeve, if he had but some considerable growth in self-denial.

3. Get a great deal of love towards that Christ that loved us with a love stronger then death : get love of that Christ that may be stronger then life. Let nothing in the world be of any consideration with you, so as Christ may be magnified in your bodies: love will breed courage, and cast out fear : slavish fear before God, carnal fear before men.

4. Get a true insight into an account of suffering and troubles whence they are : they issue from the same love with redemption of your souls from hell, and your glorification: God doth every thing in pursuance of the purpose of his love : he doth every thing according to the platform and pattern of his thoughts towards us from eternity. Consider what troubles are, and to what end ; not to destroy, but to try: to wean from the world, to fit for heaven.

5. Get an insight into the vanity of the creature : you reckon the creature some great matter, and that is the reason of your love, and of your fear.

6. Get the fear of God, that may over-rule other fears: *Fear not him that can but kill the body, but fear him that is able to cast body and soul into hell fire.*

7. Keep a clear conscience void of offence towards

160 *Mr. Pledger's Farewell Sermon.*

towards God and towards men: by a heart abasing confession of what is past, and the application of the blood of Christ, and by mortification and watchfulness therein keep your selves from evil for the time to come.

8. Get a better assurance of eternal life; a glimpse and sight of this would make a man run through the very flames of hell. How comfortable was *Steven* when a shower of stones was about his eares, to see Jesus standing at the right hand of God! I wonder how they dare to venture their life that have no ground of a better life: but for those that have a well-grounded hope of the mercy of God, they say, We reckon these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, to work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. *Fear not any of these things which you shall suffer.*

Pro. 7.

Christ does limit Satan, he hath him in a string, him and all his Instruments: (*The Devil shall cast some of you into prison, &c.*) Every word hath its weight: Who shall do it? the Devil: What shall he do? *cast you into prison*: How far? some of you: How long? *ten dayes*: For what use? that you may be tryed: Christ as he hath Satan in a chain of providence, so he hath a chain of restraint; it is Christ that sets a circle about him, he cannot cause a hair of thy head to fall: he is in the hand of Christ: they are as truly under

under him and his hand, as they are against him : If God lets alone his Enemies, what shall they not doe? If God lets alone his people, what shall they doe?

2. God has a special Providence about the things of his Church by way of Eminencie, by way of permission, and ordination.

3. You will not deny but there's power enough in God to destroy all that are against him, and to limit all, and all shall make to the praise of God, and to his peoples good.

4. The Lord is exceeding mercifull, he cannot hold when the Enemy comes to insult, to blaspheme, and revile; *Now will I arise, saith God, and set him at liberty from him that puffeth at him* : there is not only a judging of their Enemies hereafter, but a judging of them here : *the world shall say, Verily there is a God that rewardeth righteousness, verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.*

5. God has a special design in hand : therefore just so farr as he will carry on that design God hath towards his people (which is alwaies a designe of faithfullnesse) just so farr shall the Enemy goe. *Isa. 10.* The Enemy means not so, he means to cutt off a people not a few ; but Gods end was otherwise, and he will overrule them : this is the Comfort, there's a set time, there's an end.

M

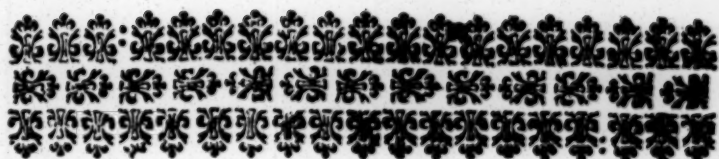
There

There is a difference between the afflicting of Gods people, and judging their enemies: In the intention, and extension: one is for ruine, the other in proportion: one is a light affliction, the other a load. And then for extension one is for ever, and the other is for time, for ten dayes. Then our afflictions shall have an end, and a comfortable end: Are not these two ends comfortable, the end of our sins, and the end of our sorrow? God will restore comfort to his mourners; let us be mourners during the time of mourning: God will quickly cloath us with garments of praise: there shall be an end of our sufferings, never an end of our joy and glory.

Pro. 8.

To conclude in a word, *Be faithful to the death.* Be faithful in your promises, in your vows and purposes, your covenants of obedience and reformation: persist in the doctrine of the Gospel, and the worship of the Gospel, and the ministry of the Gospel, and office Christ hath fixt in his Church: be faithful by your most earnest, zealous desires before the Lord: *Be faithful to the death:* he will never let you see death till all your fears are conquered; he can presently take them away; he will certainly be present with you in all your troubles. And remember, God in tender mercy and faithfulness, for the present, accepts the unfeigned purpose to be constant and faithful to him to the death.

Mr.



Mr. Collins farewel Sermon.

Jude v. 3.

Contend earnestly for the faith, &c.



These words contain two parts :

1. A Duty exhorted to. 2. The manner of the management of that Duty.

The duty exhorted to, is, to retain the faith delivered to the Saints : The manner of its management is, that we should earnestly contend to keep it;

I opened the termes, What's meant by faith ?

It is not so much the grace of faith, but the Doctrine of faith ; not special faith whereby we apprehend special mercy upon a promise made to the Elect, but the *Fides quæ creditur*, the whole substance of the doctrine of Christ as to things that are to be believed, and duties that are to be practised.

But why is said *The faith that was once delivered* ? (that is) Invariably, Irrevocably, once for all. *Delivered*, respects the priviledge the Saints of God had in the faith that God had left; 'tis the faith of the Gospel, committed as a Treasure : And the Church is called a Candlestick, not only to hold out the light , but to hold the light : whence the Church is called the pillar, or the ground of truth : not that they are to make Doctrines , but to hold forth the doctrines of Christ, even as Tables and Pillars, upon which Proclamations are hung and held forth to be made publique : so is the Church of Christ, 'tis that in which the Truths of the Lord Jesus are kept, and will be kept from one age to an other.

But what's the import of the word [*Earnestly contend* ?] It's a word used only once in the new Testament in the Composition : The word in the root is frequently used, and imports a *struggling with might and main, as those that use to run at games*. It's used for *Jesus Christ* in his sufferings,
He

He was in an Agony; the same word from whence this word is compounded. The Apostle would imply such a contention, such a struggling to keep the faith of the Gospel, as one word in the English is not able to expresse it, and *Interpreters* very much differ what's the import: the best center in this, that we should so contend for the faith, as men that would contend to keep their very lives.

The Proposition is this, That it is the duty of the Saints of God to maintain an earnest contention, to struggle for and to keep the faith that was betruſted with them: Wherein this Contention doth conſiſt:

1. It is not a Carnal contention, the weapons of our warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual, the Saints are not called to contend for the faith with Carnal weapons, with Carnal power and force: (not by might and power, but by the Spirit of God) force and power, and a fleſhly Arme, Priſons, Pillories, and Chains, and taking away of mens Comforts and Eſtates upon the account of the Faith of the Gospel, hath been the uſual way of Errors defending it ſelf: Prayers and Tears are the Churches weapons.

2. 'Tis not a contention of uncharitableneſſe: This contention allows no murthering either of the bodies or ſouls of men: Chriſtians are ſo to contend againſt Error and ſinfull practice, as to love their perſons, and pity thoſe

they contend with. There are some opinions, that there is no way to shew a holy way of zeal against, nor be able to destroy them but by a holy separating from the persons: there were such to whom it was not lawful to say God speed, or receive them into their houses: but yet this is in order to the saving the soul; Saving some plucking them as brands out of the fire.

But positively, this holy contention it consists in these four things.

1. In managing the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, against errors and sinful practises, to be able to confute them mightily, as *Apollos* did, out of the Scriptures, shewing the Jews that he Jesus is the Christ.

2. By Prayer: for to pray down sinful opinions and practises. That we mean when we pray, *Thy kingdom come*, that the Gospel may run on and be glorified; that these nights of darkness may be dispelled: that Truth may shine to the perfect day.

3. By holy practising against them: by holding forth the Word of life in your conversations: by striving together by a mutual provocation for the faith of the Gospel in respect of holy walking.

4. By being able to suffer for them.

The Reasons of the Point I gave you.

I shall now sum up all in a word of Exhortation, to press every one that bears the name of a Saint, to take up this Exhortation of the Apost'e, *Earnestly to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the Saints.* The sum of all is, to beg that you would be valiant for the truth of Christ, that whatever hath been delivered to you consonant to the truth, agreeable to the faith delivered to us, that you would struggle might and main by all Christian courage, by argument, practice, prayer, by suffering, rather then let go those truths that God hath taught you by his faithful Ministers: that Christ that hath been preached to you: those Scriptures you have in your hands; those Doctrines you have learned by experience, by prayer, by searching the word: those wayes of worship God hath taught you: those patterns of his house, and out-goings, and returnings there that he hath taught you: be exhorted to hold them fast, and not to let them go (*contend earnestly for the faith, &c.*)

It is to be lamented, that there is so sad a spirit of indifferencie among Christians, as we find at this day. Many do so carry it, as if there were nothing in the Gospel of Christ that were worthy the owning by practising, or worthy the owning by suffering. This luke-warm indifferent temper hath done the Church of God a great deal of mischief formerly; and if admitted now, will do you as much mischief again.

168 *Mr. Collins Farewell Sermon.*

It hath been one of the sins which the Lord at this day is judging and punishing his poor people for, that our zeal have been so hot against one another for meer circumstances, and so cold when we are like to lose the substance: that our contentions rise so high in matters hardly of any moment, and our spirits work so low when they are to gain the great things for which Christ suffered, and which he delivered to us. It is my work therefore to beg you, that you would put on a holy resolution, that there may be no contention among us (for we are Brethren) but only that contention, who may most retain and evidently witness the Faith, that is delivered to us; It is the trust God hath committed, and he doth expect and look how we will manage it with courage and confidence, to keep the Faith of the Gospel. There are very great oppositions against you, and there ought to be great resolutions of Christians to maintain themselves against such oppositions. It is a very sad thing that Christians should see the Faith and the wayes of the Gospel of God as it were taken from them at any time, and they have not one word to speak, nor any thing at all for to venture in suffering for the wayes and truths of Jesus Christ; *Moses* had such a holy zeal, that when *Aaron* was an example to the people to lead them to idolatry, he contended with him earnestly to his face. The zeal of Gods servants is so small now that though *Balaam* be about the work, we have not a word to speak: Though the false Prophets of Antichrist be about the business, yet no Christian

an hath courage to speak. The holy Apostle *Paul*, when *Peter* walked with an uneven foot, and began to *Judaize*, he tells us, he did resist him to his face: shall *Paul* resist *Simon-Peter*, and shall not the Saints of God resist *Simon-Magus*? shall they resist *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, and shall we not contend with *Alexander* the Copper-smith? 'tis but suitable to what God expects; and the Exhortation here given us, that we should maintain it with might and main, as that which is our Treasure, which we will not let go, the faith once delivered to the Saints.

To put you upon this, I might encourage you with severall things; all the Reasons mentioned are as so many motives to this holy spiritual contention: Shall I tell you of 3. words further?

1. The mercy of Gods delivering the Truth to you, should engage you to this holy contention: 'tis such a mercy as is a non-such mercy, *Psa.* 147. the two last Verses, *He hath given his Judgements to Jacob, and his Statutes to Israel: He hath not dealt so with every Nation.* How many of the greatest part of those that we call Christians in the world, are put like *Sampson* to grinde among the *Philistims*? Superstition, Popery, Idolatry, Will-worship, such things as Jesus Christ never delivered to his Saints, having both their eyes out, the Scripture light that should

should have shewed them the truth taken from them, and their Consciences that should teach them; carried in the pocket of some base priest, that dare not think any other then what he will tel them. How many are there, even of the very reformed of the world, who only get upon some broken plank of Ship-wracked truth, whereby they swim to the Lord Jesus! But God does not deal thus with us: you have had the whole Counsel of God revealed to you, a glorious light set up in the nation for a hundred of years past, which hath been like the light of seven dayes: for these twenty years past the running too and fro of men hath increast knowledg: you have learned the truth from Gods faithful ministers: you have received it with much affliction, with many temptations: it hath cost Jesus Christ dear to send it, it hath cost you dear to receive it, and will you let it go? Your sin above all others will be most provoking to the Lord Jesus.

2. I might tel you that tis a time, wherein many let go the faith, and me thinks the Lord Jesus does by his poor and unworthy messenger speak to this great Congregation as sometime he did to his Apostles, Will ye also go away? There are many that have been forward and eminent professors of the faith delivered to the Saints, that have made Shipwrack of faith and good conscience; will you split upon the same rock? God hath kept the truth for you, and kept you in the truth hither to, and is coming to see whether you will leave it and keep it or no. We

have

have been sucking at the breasts of the Ordinances, and dandled upon the Knees of providence, and gone on in a smooth way of profession; but what will you do now when you must come possibly to suffer persecution for it? to keep the faith, you may lose your Liberty, Life, Estate. And there's a great deal of hazard upon this account, because it hath pleased God so to dispose it, as that those that should be your guides into truth, the Lord is removing them into corners. Possibly while they have been with you, you have kept the faith; but what will you do when they are gone? While *Moses* was with the people, they cleaved to the Lord; when once he was gone into the Mount, they fell to their Idolatry and worshipped a Calf. While *Paul* was at *Ephesus* the flock was kept pure, but (saith he) I know after my departure, grievous Wolves shall break in, not sparing the flock, &c. So while you have heard of God, who sends voices and warnings to scare away the Wolves and Foxes from you, possibly you may keep the faith; but what will you do when God removes them?

3. God hath ever had in all ages of his Church a word of his Patience to be kept to try his Saints, and therefore it does concerne you for to be valiant for the truth. In all the series of Gods dispensations with his Church, there hath been something or other of the faith of Christ, that hath cost them resisting to blood, to sacrifice their lives, to lay down all that they have for it by suffering: Now even as they, so we if not in
the

the same thing, yet in the same faith : we have still some word or other of Gods patience to keep, therefore we need to have on the Armour of Light ; you must wrestle with the fiery Tryal ; for there is some Jewel that Jesus Christ puts upon you to wear, that Persecutors, Persecutions, Heresies, Hereticks will scratch at, which you must hold out with losse of life to keep ; and this must be till the latter part of the rage and reign of Antichrist is out, and even as you keep that, so will God keep you, *Rev. 3. 10.* As you honour the word of Gods patience, so God will honour you ; As you are faithfull to him, so will he give you the Crown, and no otherwise : Hence therefore it concerns us all to be armed with a holy confidence and resolution, as to this spiritual warfare, in contending for the faith delivered to us.

But the great thing I shall speak to, is, Wherein may Christians be helped in this holy struggling and contention ?

I shall only mention 5. or 6. things, some to fit you for it, others to help you in the management of it : I shall name them mixtly, and not distinct.

Rule 1.

First, bring all Doctrines that are offered you to believe, and all Practises that are put upon you to practise, to the Scriptures the word of God :

God : try them there whether they be to be retained, or to be rejected: You will have this double advantage by it: 1. To discover what is right and what is wrong. 2ly. To have on the best part of your Armour, whereby to contend against it.

1. To discover what is right, and what is wrong; for the Scripture alone is the Touchstone of Doctrines, and the Tryal of Spirits: The Scripture does discover it self, and doth discover all things that are contrary to it: when you are bidden to try all things, 'tis not by practising all things, as some poor giddy-headed Christians of late dayes have done, who have made the practising every opinion, to be their trying of it, till they have run themselves into all opinions; but 'tis by the Scripture you are first to try, and then to practise; who are like the Noble *Bereans*, that were more noble then those of *Thessalonica*, because they searched the Scripture. To bring the Truths that have or shall be taught you, or the Doctrines that shall be imposed upon you, to the word of God; to see whether they be according to the Truth, or no: for false Doctrines, and false Worship, of all things they hate the Scripture most; they are like false coyn, or false Jewels, which go best in the night: false coyn will not endure the Touchstone, nor false Jewels the day; no more will false Doctrines the Scripture, therefore it will be a great way to discover them.

2. It will be a great way to vanquish them, *Eph. 6.* Above all take the Sword of the Spirit; the word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, by which we slay Heretical Doctrines, and by which we are to slay sinful practises: All those stones that the Davids of God have flung at the *Goliath's* of Error, they have been taken out of the brook of the Scriptures: therefore reduce all Doctrines offered you to believe, all worships that are taught you to practise, to the word of God.

1. All Doctrines that are taught you to believe, reduce them thither; there's no profession of faith to be built, but the stones must be fetched from that mountaine: If you believe divine truths, but not because the Scripture propounds them, your faith is but humane: If you believe any thing the Scripture doth not speak, your faith is Diabolical: the word of God and your faith must run parallel: All that is written, you must believe; and you must believe nothing but what is written: This was the Rule of the old Testament: *Isa. 8. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony;* to the Law (that is) to *Moses*; and to the Testimony (that is) to the Prophets: if they speak not according to these, there's no light in them. When any thing was offered to Christ by way of enquiry, his common answer was, How readest thou? *Luk. 10. 26.* How is it written? When the holy Apostle *Paul* would redress the abuse of the Lords Supper, he does not carry the Corinthians to these and these Fathers, to this and that use and custome, but brings that, how it

was

was delivered from the Lord ; he reduces them to the institution, What I have received from the Lord, that I have delivered to you. The word of God is perfect, in respect of Doctrine, and in respect of worship. So that whatsoever is offered you to believe, you must try it by the perfect rule ; for 'tis given by Divine inspiration to make the man of God perfect and wise to Salvation : It is such a *Canon* about Doctrines to be received, as nothing must be added nor taken from it : *Rev. 22.* Therefore it's called a Testament ; Now no man dares add to another mans last, Will and Testament : who shall dare to add a faith to the Faith of Gods Elect, to that which Christ hath delivered ? I will give you this as a certain observation, that there never was any thing of fals Doctrine brought into the Church, or any thing of fals worship imposed upon the Church, but either it was by neglecting the Scripture, or by introducing something above the Scripture.

2. Bring hither all practises of worship, as well as Doctrines to be believed: try the wayes and forms of Christ house, by the word of Christ; he shews us the patternes thereof, the outgoings and returnings thereof: he was faithful in all his House, even as *Moses* was who did not leave a pin of the Tabernacle, but did appoint it. There is nothing decent and comely in the Church, which is so much pleaded for, but what comes in by Christs institution. Whatever you worship without a warrant from the word of God,

or

or by whatever means you worship without a warrant from the word of God, you worship you know not what: *Joh. 4. 20.* 'tis Will-worship: and by the same Rule you receive one Will-worship, you may receive twenty: 'tis vain worship, it will never reach the end of your Communion with God; (for he is a Spirit, and seeks such worshippers) it will never bring you to the enjoyment of God: therefore in point of worship, bring it to the Word of God, and as to faith and worship say, Hitherto my faith and my worship shalt thou go, and no further. This Rule rightly improved, it will dis-intang'e you from the hooks, and take you off from the baits of those cunning Fowlers (for to such the Apostle doth compare them in the New Testament) who seek to betray souls from the simplicitie of Gospel-faith. Never any did invent false doctrine, but to put up them; they put down the Scripture, and they put out the eyes of Christians to make them bend to it before they use other means to compell them; their great work, is to darken the light of the truth, and in the room of the Scripture to be your rule, they set up other Rules; which, because there are three marvellous Popular, I desire to mention them in opposition to this Rule I have given you.

There's a three-fold Rule men wou'd set up to deceive poor souls: The name of a Church: Antient Customes: The Generality of those where they live.

The

1. The Specious Name of a Church, to make that a rule to Doctrine and to worship. It was the plea of the Popish party in the *Marian* dayes, What? will you not believe the Church? hath not the Church power to make Institutions and Canons about this, and that, and the other? will you not believe the Church? will you go out from the true Church? Thus do men that go about to deceive; nothing like it as to the catching and deluding many poor souls, by making the Church their rule. It was the way of the Popish party of old, and if Antichrist ever hath power again over the Church of Christ in that measure and degree it has had, you must expect it again: therefore let me caution you against it. Can we enquire who this Church was? It was only the decree of the proud Church, Antichrist of old, and the Antichristian Clergy, who (as you may read in their Stories) would Lord it over the Faith of Gods heritage. I must tell you, the name, and custome, and way of the Churches of Christ, is a reverend holy thing, even of that that is a true Church: 'Tis a weighty Argument, when the Apostle saith, *We have no such Custome, nor the Churches of Christ*: And therefore I do fully close with him that said, No sober man will go against Reason: No Christian against the Scripture: and No peaceable minded man against the Church: But then the Church must shine by a Divine Scripture Light: If that be a

N

rule

The

rule, it must be ruled by the Scripture; the Churches power is not Authoritative, as to give Laws against the Laws of Christ; it's only Ministerial: we do believe the Scripture for it self, and not because of the Church; we receive the Scripture by the Church: Hence therefore when we set up the name of a Church, let us see whether that Church walks in the way of Christ, whether she be his Spouse or no, whether she doth act according to his Institutions, whether they bring his light, yea or no; then submit: for it is not what a Church practises, but what they are warranted to practise: not what they hold for a truth, but what they are warranted to hold as the word of truth: The word was written after the Church; but as it is the word of God, it's before it. This therefore will break the snare if you be set upon by the specious name of the Church; look that the Church hath warrant from Scripture Institution, and then submit to Church Institution.

A second Rule I observe men would set up to betray poor souls from the faith once delivered to them, is Antient Custome: (Our Fathers worshipped in this Mountain) when they would hold forth that which the Scripture is short in, they will send us to such and such Customes, of so many hundred years standing. It is to be bewailed that the date, the standing of false Doctrines and false Worship is so antient; for though at first they were but Innovations, yet to succeeding Generations they become old: And
tis

'tis a very great truth, that That is the most antient, is the most true, and therefore there lies a great snare in this. Therefore when Antiquity is pretended, if you find not their hoary heads in the way of Righteousness, there is little reason for you to reverence them, or comply with them; no more then there was reason so suddenly to be taken with the *Gibeonites* mouldy bread, and clouted shoes: When matters of Antiquity are pretended, say as *Ignatius*, *Jesus Christus est mea Antiquitas*, Jesus Christ is my Antiquity; so say, Truth is my Antiquity: for though an opinion have been practised a thousand years, yet men may have the word of truth in their hearts that is antienter then all:

A third Rule that men would set up, is, The general course of the world, or place, the generality of those where they live: This was that the Popish Party did often mention to the Witnesses of Jesus Christ; what? will you be wiser then others? can't you do as others do? must you be singular? And this is a taking rule for to make you conformable to those things possibly the word of God will not warrant, if you bring not this custome to the word of God: 'tis not what the most do, but what we may do: 'tis not what is the practice of all in general, but what ought to be the singular care, and strict holiness of Christians in particular, that the word of God will allow: Christians are not to be conformable to the present world, *Rom. 12. 1*. The word will tell you it is no more safe to follow a mul-

titude to do evil, then it will be sweeter to be in Hell with a great company : The word will let you know the secrets of the Lord are with a very few, and those t^e m that fear him : as for the whole world, it lies in wickednesse : The word will tell you The wayes of Jesus Christ, and the profession of Jesus Christ, is commonly called a Sect ; it is everywhere spoken against, and men hate it everywhere : Therefore set up this Rule in your hearts, in your houses, in your meditations, in your practice.

Rule 2.

Be very well rooted and established in the faith that hath been delivered to you. I observe it's one of the great reasons why Christians so easily let go the profession they have made, is, because they were never well built upon it, nor established in it. There are many Christians that through their own itching ears, heaping up Teachers to themselves, have never been rooted or established in the truth ; the Lord pittie them and keep them this day : Many Christians that have attended to establishing means, yet never seriously considered, nor laid things to their heart, but are like those the Apostle speaks of, *Heb. 5. 12.* that had need to learn the first Oracles of God. How many among us profess with the highest, but have little ground for their faith ? only (with the Jews) the Traditions of the Elders, the custome of the place, Education, and

and because such a party of men say so, because nobody denies it, because Ministers commonly preached it; but to take any solid and serious ground, they are yet to seek. 'Tis not with the things of God as with other Arts, as Logick, Rhetorick, Astronomy; in these Arts the principle is presupposed to be proved; no man goes about to prove there is Reason, that there is Number, that there are Heavenly bodies, because sense and experience shews it: But 'tis quite otherwise in the things of God: for you are not only to run away with the notion, that there is a God, that this God is one, and that these are his word and his works; but you are to know this by experience, because the knowledge of these things comes in by infusion, by faith, by a belief that God is: *For by faith we believe the worlds were made by the word of God, Heb. 11. 2, 3.* It is that therefore I would presse you to, that you would labour for an established spirit: Do not only hear the things of God, but see them; the first will but blind you, or at best leave you at great uncertainties; the last will settle you. What was the reason of the holy Apostles zeal when they were under the greatest threatenings of the High Priests, and were forbid to speak in the name of Christ, and to speak of Justification by faith, and the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, and forgiveness of sins by him? (things that are furthest remote from sense and reason) the Apostle will tell you, *Act. 4. 20. We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.* Hence it is that poor silly women, that in respect

of their Imbecillity and Infirmitie of sex, the terrours of the fire and faggot, might have been such to have brought them to Apostacy, yet they confounded the great Doctors and Rabbies when they were brought before them; they were able to burn, though they could not dispute; they beheld things that were invisible. It's an excellent thing not to take up the word upon notion, upon opinion, but to have an established heart through Grace. I shall direct you in two words.

1. Get the Lord by Prayer to teach you every truth; what Jesus Christ teaches once, is everlastingly taught; no word is abiding but what the Lord Jesus teaches himself. Look as it is with Satan, when he comes to seduce men from the truth, he will present such a fine notion without, and commonly he darts in some dazzling light within, so that you never knew a Heretick take up a false opinion, but it was with a marvellous deal of sweetnesse and comfort: so when the Lord Christ teacheth by his spirit, he comes with that light, that sweetnesse, savour, and relish of truth, as will be impossible for you to let it go: Hence when Christ would confute the Pharises, that had the witness of his Father in his works, he saith, *Joh. 5. 37. Ye have neither heard his voyce at any time, nor seen his shape*: It's an excellent thing to see the shape, and hear the voyce of God.

2. Be well rooted upon Christ, or else you will never be established in any truth of Christ:
If

Mr. Collin's Farewell Sermon. 183

If you misse the Lord Jesus by the Grace of Faith, you will never hold fast the Doctrine of Faith: you are built upon the Doctrine of the Apostles, (not their persons) upon which the Lord Jesus is the corner-stone: he that does not know Jesus Christ himself, will certainly lose his Faith: What's the reason the stony ground in time of Persecution fell away? why they had not root, they were not planted upon the Lord Jesus.

Rule 3.

Thirdly, those truths that God hath taught you, and those wayes of worship God hath committed to you, love them as your lives, love them above your lives; for no man will ever contend to hold them, if he do not love them; things of low price and esteem, are presently let go; he that loves the word above his life, will let life go rather then the word: If you receive not the word out of love, every Impostor and false Prophet, every fear and terror of men will rob you of it: *Hide the word in thy heart, saith Solomon, love the truth dearly.* It was a great speech of *Calvin*, Never did any one Apostatize from the truths of Jesus Christ, but it was because he did not love the truth: And I adde this, That never did any Apostatize from the wayes and truth of Jesus Christ, but it was because they did not receive them in love, or else they have lost their love; for there's a decay of affection, as well as having no affection: if you

N 4

love

love them, what will you not suffer for them?
(but more of that by and by.)

Rule 4.

Fourthly, Guard all the truths of God, and those wayes of God that have been taught you ; guard them strongly, especially truths that are most material and fundamental : for leading truths are like Captains of Armies, if they be routed, the whole rout follows them. There is great opposition that will be made against your faith. The whole power of darknesse, of Antichrist, of his seducing spirits, likely and probably enough, will over-spread the whole face of Christianity once more, that she must sit as a Lady, before she be desolate and forsaken for ever. The Apostle bids you beware of Dogs, beware of the Concision, beware of evil-workers, guard your selves against them, guard the truths you have learned by Argument, by Scripture, by Reason, that you may have wherewithall to confute them by the word of truth mightily, out of the Scripture, as the Apostles did.

Three things you are to guard against.

1. Your own deceitfulnesse, especially in a rash and sudden forsaking of those wayes that have been taught, and the profession you have taken up ; for Christians would never be so mad to Apostatize, were they but seriously deliberate about the weight of them, *Gal. 1.6. O foolish Galathians,*

Galathians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? &c. I marvell what ailed you, that you are so soon turned away to another Gospel: One would have thought they might have spoken with Paul first, and sent to him, and reasoned the case with him: There's a marvellous bewitching in false Doctrines, and false worship, to take men presently, who are not watchfull over themselves. It is in disputations and practising truth, as it is in contentions: if you make a Judgement before you hear both parties speak, you judge unrighteously: if you forsake the wayes and truths of Jesus Christ, before you hear what can be said for them, you do unrighteously.

2. Guard them against the lusts of your own hearts. The great work of a Christian is contention; it is not so much against Antichrist; those that are without him, as that that is within him. If all Heretical Doctrines and wayes were rooted out of the world, not only the being, but the memory, the heart is bad enough in one day to set them all on foot again; therefore guard the truth: Men of corrupt minds will presently grow Reprobate, as to the faith, 1 Tim. 3. 6. Such Doctrines and Worships as shall sute with our lusts, as shall sute with exalting it self, and laying Christ low, as shall sute with an easie way to Heaven, when the Scripture saith, *straight is the Gate*; as shall sute with self-preservation: So I might secure my Estate, my Liberty: I would suspect such Doctrines
as

as these, before I take them up for the wayes of Christ.

3. Guard the truth against false Teachers, such as shall come among you in sheeps-cloathing, yet are Wolves in heart; men that creep in at unawares among you, to subvert souls: I will not here describe them, you know them well enough by their fruits: only this let me tell you in opposition to those; though you cannot come at the publique Ministry, or those God hath set over you, yet make Conscience for to take fences, to take defences from them, as you may by their counsel, prayer, help and assistance, for to guard you against false Teachers. When the Church of Christ is in the Wildernesse, you will find this is that the Holy Ghost advises them to, *Cant.* 1. 8. You are to guard your selves by communion one with another; as to go forth by the foot-steps of the flock, so also you are to go and feed your Kids besides the shepherds tents; for though 'tis not the work that God calls for, to pin your faith upon their sleeves, yet 'tis your duty to enquire of the Lord by them; for he is the Messenger of the Lord to you.

Rule 5.

Arme your selves with Resolutions to suffer for the faith of the Gospel, and for the wayes of Jesus Christ; as you should love the truth above your lives, so labour to be made willing for to part with life, estate, liberty, any thing for to
keep

keep the wayes of Jesus Christ. It is not the honour of the Gospel of Christ, to hear Christians to break out into murmurings, passions, discontent, contentions that are carnall and sinfull : your work is humbly, meekly, and patiently to lie under the hand of God, and under the hand of man too ; that becomes Christians : suffering is that that will restore the glory of Religion, that will keep the truth delivered to you , that will honour the cause of Christ best of all : follow the Example of blessed *Paul*; his expression is worthy of consideration, *2 Tim. 2. 9.* he gives a charge of keeping and propagating one of the most glorious truths, (*that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead*) yet a thing that is farthest off from sense and reason, (*wherein I suffer Trouble*) mark, *Paul* does not say, wherein I make Trouble, no, but wherein I suffer Trouble as an evil doer unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound : If this blessed and glorious Apostle would have had the faith of God bound, and have contented himself with sinfull silence, and not propagated the Gospel, *Paul* might have been free ; but *Paul* would not have the word of God bound, therefore *Paul* would suffer for it : Shall we go higher a great deal then this ? You have the glorious commendation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon this account, that he gave a free and full account of the Doctrine of his Father, and of his glorious person, before *Pontius Pilate* a bloody Persecutor : It was not by saying to his Disciples, *Fight*, nor by saying, *my Kingdom is not of this world*, but that he gave a glorious confession before

before the face of *Pilate* of the righteousness of his truth, Doctrine Gospell, and of his person. Fear to ensnare, the freedom of the truth, with your own liberty; do not ensnare it to your own lusts, nor to the will of any man! O that we could study, and improve these Scriptures more! it would make us fear God more, and man less; this is that that would make us say, as holy *David* did, *Psa. 119. 161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy words:* for he that hath the most fear on you, and upon you, you will be more afraid to fall into his hands. It is a childish thing for a Christian, to tread down the belief of any Doctrine, or practice any worship for fear of man, who hath no more power to hurt us, then we give him our selves by our fear; Fear not him that can but kill the body &c. It was the way of Gods people formerly, that they came to divide between duty commanded by God and commanded by man, you may read, in a'l the dayes of Antichrists persecution, from the beginning they came to divide in matter of obedience, to God and his truth; and worship and obedience to man. Christians nothing but a suffering spirit will help you to this, for there is no other way of Obedience in this case to authority, but to suffer under it meekly; Patiently, as lambs: This made the three children to divide between the command of the King, and the command of God: What sayes *Nebuchadnezzar*? *Every knee that bowes not, shall be cast into the Furnace:* very well, as for that matter

matter say they, *O King, we are not carefull to answer; thee for we will not bow down, &c.* What, will they not Obey him? yet they will obey him by suffering, as becomes Christians, and is the example of Christ (as if they should say) Truly we are terrifyed with the burning Furnace, but we are terrifyed with hell too: We are terrifyed by the threats of the great King, and we are likewise terrifyed by the threats of the great God: he is able to deliver us out of your torments: you are not able to deliver us from his torments: so in the case of *Daniel*: Arm your selves with this Resolution of suffering and lying down patiently and meekly under those things that you cannot do, so that God may be honoured by your holy resolution upon this Account: for truly you never do contend successfully for the faith of the Gospel, till you contend by suffering, for it is said, They overcame by the blood of the lamb: you never make Religion your business till the world see you can let such great things go, as life, estate, liberty, to keep it: Then wisdom is justified of her children: You never glorify the truths of God so much by practice, or writing, as by suffering for them. Those glorious truths against Popish justification, mixing of works with faith Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Idol worship, against all those things that were superadded contrary to Gods justification, there is such a glory upon the truths that it is hard for the Popish power ever to darken them again, because we see them written
in

in the honourable and blessed scars of the witness, and burnings of those glorious Martyrs. If you would take one another by the hand when God takes away our faithfull guides, and say, Brethren, Sisters, Friends, come let us hold together, there's no way in the world to hold on together like suffering; for the Gospel really would get more advantage by the holy, humble sufferings of one gracious Saint, meerly for the word of righteousness, then by ten thousand Arguments used against Hereticks, and false worship. Compare *Phil.* 1. 12, 13, 14. with the 27, 28, and 29. verses, How is *Paul's* bonds a furtherance of the Gospel? *Paul* no doubt was called an evil doer, one that sowed Heresie, and was hated everywhere; (saith he) *Many of the Brethren of the Lord waxed confident by my bonds, and were much more bold to speak the word without fear.* Here's the great encouragement: and then he comes to give you a precept, and that's in the 27. verse, and he speaks it as one that was leaving of them, *Only let your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ, that you may stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by your Adversaries; for unto you it is given, not only to believe, but also to suffer, &c.* It is given to you as a duty, given to you as a priviledge. O that you would confirm one another, and in slippery times hold up one another by the hand; do it in going after Gods call, and in this way, suffering for those truths you cannot otherwise hold and maintain.

Truly

Truly Christians, you had need be armed with Resolution; for the world is alwayes counting the things Gods people have suffered, for very little, and they count it prudence not to meddle therein. Those men that have easie, soft termes to comply, that they have a latitude to do any thing, I believe some Christians are of that opinion, that they would even think the Saints of God were ill advised to venture their all upon those truths they see others dyed and suffered for.

It's a sad thing, many Christians study to draw out the lines of obedience as far as the honesty of the times will give them leave, but no farther: that they would go on with the Lord Jesus to the High Priests hall, and there deny him: or that would be willing to do any thing for Christ, but are willing to suffer nothing for Christ: you very little honour Jesus Christ in this, and you will very little honour your selves at the last. It is upon this account that Christians if they see even against plain conviction of Conscience, and the word, that there are super-instituted things broke in, as in Conscience they cannot submit to, yet they can comply, why? they may be used lawfully, though not superstitiously: But saith the Apostle Paul, *Do I yet strive to please men?* Gal. 1. 6. *Am I then the Servant of Christ?* You cannot be the Servants of Christ, if you strive to please men: *Woe be to you that please men, and displease God: He that would be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Crosse, &c.* (What's that?) deny Wife, Children,

Children, Learning, Relations, Comforts, he must be willing to go out of all : Those duties the Lord Jesus Christ is most glorified in, thy are either those your slothfull hearts are most unwilling to do; or that our fearfull hearts are most unwilling to suffer for : Therefore arme your selves with resolutions to suffer,

I intended to have taken up four Appearances and coverings that Saints usually take up for to hide themselves, as under a covert, to beat down the Gospel warrants and commands, to suffer for the Faith delivered.

1. The notion that a Christian hath of indifference of things, that they are but toyes and trifles, that they may be done or not done. It is not my work to tell you what is indifferent, or name any thing in particular. As I remember, in the Book of Martyrs the usual Argument was, Why cannot you worship the Idol? why cannot you bow down as well as others? it's a small matter: cannot you shew your outward reverence, and keep your heart to your self? Indeed if there were any thing that's indifferent, a Christian hath a marvellous latitude in point of Doctrine, in point of Worship : I would caution you therefore. The terme of indifferent, I suppose 'tis divided as a pillar to rest the conscience on, which otherwise would startle, and look with a broad face upon them : Things that come under this notion, had need well to be weighed and considered : If they tell you plainly they

they came out of *Rome*, and had the plague of Popery upon them, they came from Hell, were hatched there, and the curse of God is upon them; no body would entertain them. They must pretend they came from the Church, from the Apostles, descended from the Scriptures; and hence they are entertained with that freedom and willingness, as that most Christians take no notice, but fall down under them; and so the very power and life of Religion and holy practice is eaten out. The Devil hath three ways whereby he makes men seek after him. 1. Commonly he doth cover holiness with other names. 2ly. He perswades that sins are but little. 3ly. That they may repent hereafter. The first is suitable to my purpose, That virtue or grace is covered with other names: therefore if a man be holy, he is called precise; if zealous, he is said to be rash; and if it be really a sin, it shall come under the name of indifferency, a toy, a trifle, and things of that nature: therefore you had need be cautious; for 'tis no matter what name the sin is, what title it goes under, as what it is really. As to things of Doctrine and Worship, I know there is no *medium*; every man must give an account to the Lord of what he does; therefore I do not tell you what is indifferent, and what not; but search the Scripture, take heed what you receive for indifferent.

The second thing Christians will say, is, I hope without danger I may comply with them, considering I bear them as my burthens. This is
O very

very like the Young man in the Gospel; he came to Christ, and would have him come up to his termes; and when Christ told him, Yet he lacked one thing, *Go sell all, &c.* he went away sorrowfull: So, many Christians they would follow Christ, but they cannot, because there is not such security in it, but they will go away sorrowfull: Thou Hypocrite, art thou willing to forsake all for Christ, yet cannot leave life, liberty, and some of these small things? Will you wound the name of Christ, and pretend to be sorrowfull for it? I conclude, thy pretence shall not excuse thee; for so was *Pilate* loth to crucifie Christ; and as a means and expedient, he calls for water and washes his hands, saying, *I am innocent from the blood of this just man*: But do you think God excused *Pilate*? no more will he you: Whatever is brought to you, is either forbidden, or commanded by God: If forbidden by God, why do you meddle with it? If commanded of the Lord, why are you burdened with it? why do you it heavily? for the Lord loves one that is cheartuill in his service: neither man nor God is pleased with such.

A third thing it is which satisfies many, That they may follow in some things the opinions of wise men, holy men, and good men; That they may do as they do. I shall say but these two words. First, Many men are reputed good; wise, and honest, that are not so: A man may be accounted an honest man, that yet may be covetous: he may be accounted a very good man
yet

yet be really corrupt in heart, and in his lusts; therefore 'tis good to try men: I dare not trust mine own heart, (unlesse God give strength of grace, and assistance every moment) least I should betray the truth of Christ upon some advantage: when the Devil would set abroach an evil opinion or practice, it's his common way to tun it up in some clean Vessel, men of civil honesty and goodnesse: You read the old Prophet drew the young one in, though expressely forbidden by God himself: When you do not fear a young Christian, it may be the example of an old Minister shall draw you; therefore 'tis good to mind who you follow. Secondly, Grant they are all good and reall, they are men fearing God, (as there are some) yet God will not let his people know all his mind. There are some that would, but cannot know all his mind and will; the Lord is free and voluntary, he reveales things necessary to salvation; but for other things he withholds. But what's your rule? *Call no man Master:* you are to follow no man further then he follows Christ: And indeed for a man to follow the example of others, wherein they sin and do not know it, it is just like the case of holy *Noah*, (who was a gracious man) and knew not the strength of the Grape, he was drunk with his own Vineyard: But what's the fruit of it? his Son *Cham* saw his nakednesse, and discovered it: If good and holy men taste of the intoxicated Wine that is too strong for them, and know it not, will you sip after them? unlesse you will discover your nakednesse, and proclaim it from Generation to

Generation, and make your selves *Chams*, not Sons of the Prophet : Therefore I know not what warrant you have to follow such examples.

The fourth thing is this ; Christians usually they do no good by standing out. *Answ.* Whether we get, or do good or no, we are to do our duty. The Lord will honour you for suffering for the truth, 2 *Thes.* 1. 3, 4, 5. And by suffering you shall confirm the Saints, and bear testimony ; you shall witness against all false Doctrines, and false Worship, before the whole world. By your Humility and Patience, when you suffer not as evil doers, but as those that suffer for the word of Righteousnesse, the word of Truth, for holding fast the Lord Jesus and his Faith, that is more precious then Heaven and Earth, then any created thing : this will make your name as a sweet savour to all Generations ; when those that Apostatize, Persecute, and oppose Jesus Christ, their memories shall be left as a curse to the people of God.



Rich Treasure in Earthen Vessels.

A
SERMON,
Preached (Jan. 1. 166²₃.) at the
FUNERAL

Of that Reverend and Faithfull
Servant of Jesus Christ,

MR. JAMES NALTON.

Late Minister of Gods Word at
St. Leonards Foster-lane.

By T. HORTON, D. D.

*Your Fathers, where are they? And the Prophets,
do they live for ever?*

LONDON, Printed in the Year 1663.



To the Reader.

Courteous Reader,



Do here present unto thee a Sermon preached by a Reverend and Learned Minister in this City, at the Funeral of that faithfull, godly, and truly consciencious Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. James Nalton, whose Name is as a precious Oyntment poured forth unto all the Godly in this Nation: He was one of those precious sons of Zion (of whom the world is not worthy) ejected by men, but now taken into a better Living by the great Bishop of Souls. Surely Englands sins are very great and heinous, that have turned God and Man against us. Our Teachers are thrown into corners by men, and called away from us by God. Oh that our eyes could run down with Rivers of tears! But who layes this to heart? The Righteous are

To the Reader.

despised, rejected, and taken away, but no man regards it: If our wrestling Jacobs, our Moses in the gap, our praying Elijahs, our weeping Jeremiahs, be called home, Lord, what will become of England! whose Prayers will be instrumental to remove those Judgements incumbent; and prevent those which are imminent? If the Atoners in Zion cease from among us, surely then 'tis not only our duty, but our safety to pray for (and consequently bewaile the losse of) their lives, who are our Fathers, the Chariots and Horsemen of England, for whose sake this Nation is kept from the Judgement of Sodom and Gomorah, yet guilty of greater Abominations. I shall say no more, but commend this Sermon to thy reading, and intreat that candor from thee, that if thou findest any Errata in words or phrases, or any thing that seems imperfect, not to impute it to the Reverend and Learned Dispenser, but to the Transcriber hereof. So I commend thee to God.



Farewell.



Rich treasure in Earthen Vessels, &c.

2 Cor. 4. 7.

But we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.



Here is nothing so excellent or compleat in this World, but hath its diminishment and qualifications: and something that doth disparage it, and abates of the excellency thereof: not the things of this world onely, but spiritual things in some sort, as to enjoy them, and partake of them in this life, have their inconveniencies and disparagements annext, and are mingled with something that abates of their worth: an instance of which we have here in this present Scripture which the Apostle Paul signifies to us concerning the enjoyment of the Ministry of the Gospel of Christ. He had in the verse before the Text, told us the great priviledge that both Ministers and others had in having the glorious Gospel, viz. *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, shining into*

into our hearts: the consideration of which is of great encouragement to us: yet adds this as a qualification of it, viz. *But we have this treasure in Earthen Vessels, &c.* That which doth qualify it, is, That this excellent treasure hath its conveyances through weak and mean persons, men of frailty and mortality. In the words there are two main parts:

I. The Dispensation it self.

II. The Account of it.

I. The Dispensation it self, This *Treasure* we have in Earthen Vessels, &c.

II. The Account of it, *That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

I shall begin with the first, the Dispensation it self, which hath two branches.

1. The *Depositum*, the thing laid up.

2. The *Repository*, in which this treasure is laid up.

First, The *Depositum*, or thing laid up, which is a *Treasure*; and what is this *Treasure*, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The Gospel is a *Treasure* according to a twofold consideration:

In respect of the $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{Matter} \\ 2. \text{Ministry} \end{array} \right\}$ of it.

Both make up a treasure. The Matter of it, the things of the Gospel are rich things, and the conveyances of it; the Ministerial gifts and ability, by which the Gospel is administered, do make up the *Treasure*: 'Tis a *Treasure* in both respects.

I. In respect of the matter of it: therefore it is we read of the *Riches of Christ*, of the *Riches of the Gospel*. The Scripture makes mention of three things

things wherein the Gospel is agreeable to a treasure.

1. A Treasure is a thing of dignity and worth; 'tis not a company of pebbles (though many) that will make up a Treasure: a Treasure consists of things of worth and dignity: and thus is the Gospel: in it are contained excellent and admirable truths, the Myſteries of ſalvation by Chriſt; the doctrine of the Gospel brings gladtydings of peace and reconciliation with God in Chriſt: there we have the gifts and graces of God; there we have glory and immortality, &c. and thoſe things in the Gospel are adminiſtred to us: there is no ſcience in the world brings ſuch treasure as this.

2. The Gospel is a treasure for variety, abundance, and plurality. 'Tis not one thing of worth, but many that makes up a treasure: if few, yet much worth muſt be comprehended in them: ſo in the Gospel we have the manifold wiſdom of God, the rich treasures of Wiſdom and Knowledge. The Gospel, though it be but one for ſubſtance, yet 'tis many for improvements: 'tis a chain of many links: one faith, but divers articles of it: ſo it is a treasure in that reſpect.

3. 'Tis a treasure for its cloſeneſs: We do not open a treasure to every one, but it is kept cloſe. The Goſpell is a ſecret myſtery, hidden, not revealed to every one: it is not diſcovered to carnal worldly men, though it may be revealed to them in the outward propoſition, yet not in the ſpirituality of it. *But where ſhall Wiſdom be found? and where is the place of underſtanding? ſaith Job,*

Job, ch. 28. v. 12. The peace of the Gospel is a treasure hid in the field, not found by every one.

2. The Gospel is a treasure in respect of the Ministry of it; so the Apostle hints, 'tis not only light, but a shining light, which *bath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, &c.* 'Tis a treasure in this respect, viz. in the discovery and shining of it; the conveyances, the severall gifts and graces of the ministry, by which the Gospel is conveyed to us, makes up a treasure; and as the Ministry is a treasure, so the opportunities and advantages thereof are. Thus the Gospel and the Ministry thereof is precious, and ought to be esteemed and made use of by us. We should highly account of the Gospel, and put a high value on it, for it is a treasure; yea, it is a treasure in the want of other treasures, they are rich that are made partakers of it: *Silver and Gold have I none, (saith St. Peter to the Cripple) but such as I have I give it thee*: this is the priviledge of Ministers; though it may be, poor in respect of themselves, yet are rich to others. These excellent riches are committed to us, and accordingly we must not only make use of them our selves, but make them known to others; the Gospel is a treasure not for us to keep up, but to discover, reveal, and manifest to others; to give the *light of the glory of God, &c.* This is the work of the Ministry. We have indeed a treasure, but not for our selves only, but for others; so we are to keep it, to preserve and maintain it, but so as to be diligent to impart what is committed to us for the edification of others. *Every Scribe instructed in*
the

the Kingdom of Heaven as a good householder, bringeth forth things new and old.

The Gospel is a treasure, therefore we ought to carry our selves answerable to it : As,

1. We must labour for it, be diligent in the search of it, dig for it as for *hidden treasures*. *Lift up thy voice for understanding, &c. Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4.* Dig for it ; you know there is a great deal of pains taken, and labour used to get worldly treasure : What would not men venture for it ? they will go over Sea and Land, go through fire and water, expose themselves to all dangers for earthly treasure, *make unto themselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousnesse*, passe away a great deal of time, and take a great deal of care for it.

2. Esteem this treasure, this heavenly wisdom, this Evangelical knowledge, even the Gospel of Christ ; labour to understand it, and have the efficacy wrought upon your hearts.

3. Rejoyce in it ; how do men rejoyce in earthly treasure ? so should we ; as the Merchant in the Gospel when he had found the Pearl of Prize, rejoyced exceedingly ; so we ought, as being made partakers thereof. *I rejoyced at thy word, even as one that had found great spoils, (saith David)* so should we rejoyce alwayes in this treasure. 'Tis said of those that sate under *John Baptists Ministry*, that they rejoyced but for a while, and that is the condition and misery of many. The City of *Samaria* when they had received the Gospel, 'tis said they had great joy, *Act. 8. 9.*

4. Be carefull to keep and preserve it, for it is a treasure, and therefore we must treasure it

up in our hearts; and the rather, because it will keep us. It keeps (as *Chrysostome* saith) the house where it is; other treasures cannot secure themselves, but if we keep this treasure, it will secure us. *Discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee, Prov. 2. 11.* thus you see the excellency of this spiritual wisdom. So much for the first thing considerable in the first branch, viz. the *Depositum*, the *Treasure*.

The second thing considerable, is, the *Repository*, *b. e.* Earthen Vessels, or Vessels of Earth, earthen Pitchers: these are the *Repository*, but we have this treasure in *Earthen Vessels*, &c. *Earth* is a word of dominion, and disparagement, and that in three regards.

1. In regard of its meannesse and baseness.
2. In regard of its foulness and pollution.
3. In regard of its frailty and transitoriness.

'Tis passing away in all these respects: these Earthen Vessels in the Text, is to be understood, the Apostles and Ministers of Jesus Christ, in regard of their outward man, are so called, and are so according to this threefold notion.

1. In regard of their meanness: their outside is mean, either for person, or sometimes for estate, body, and outward deportment. This was the condition (you know) of the first Ministers of Christ, mean and ordinary persons outwardly, God made use of. Nay our Master, our blessed Lord and Saviour was mean, in regard of his humane birth, and reckoned of by most men according to his birth and parentage. So it is with the Servants of Christ; they are in their persons generally

nerally base, mean, low, and accordingly rendred despicable to the eyes of the world.

II. In regard of foulness and pollution: Ministers are called Earthen Vessels, they have many weakneses, they are men subject to the like passions as others. 'Tis true, the Ministers of Christ have greater advantage then others, in regard of their education, knowledge, gifts, and employments, being more free from those defilements and snares that others are intangled in: yet through the remainders of the flesh in them, they have many infirmities: so Satan watches them more then others, layes more snares for them, in regard of their parts and employments: so that they are more subject to his temptations then others. Satan hath a desire to sift them (as the Apostle *Peter*) as Wheat, because he knows they will draw many after them; so that they must needs be subject to many weakneses and infirmities. Sometimes God makes use of the worst sort of men, even the most vitious and malicious: first, he changeth them, and then makes use of them as instruments of glory. The Apostle *Paul* was a Vessel of Election, to carry the name of Christ unto the Gentiles: yet in times past a great Persecutor. So it pleaseth God to make use of such, that the excellency of the power may be of God, &c.

III. Ministers are called Earthen Vessels in regard of the frailty and mortality of their persons, and Earthen Vessels are soon crackt and broken. Ministers are subject to many infirmities of body: This Heavenly light of the Gospel shineth often through

through I a thorns of glasse, which are soon broken. Ministers have weak and frail bodies: *Timothy* had his bodily infirmities, and *Trophimus* was left sick at *Miletum*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 20. and *Epaphroditus* was lick nigh unto death, *Phil.* 2. 27. And *Paul* had need of *Luke* the Physician, probably in regard of his weaknesse. Thus the Servants of God are subject to many infirmities. Besides the reasons in the Text, there are other reasons why God will have it so.

1. That they may be more compassionate, and more sensible of the weaknesse of others; for *likenesse of condition, breeds sympathy of affection.*

Men are apt to pity those in the like condition with themselves; so our Lord took our nature upon him, that he might pity us; he took flesh and blood upon him, he was tempted in all things like unto us, but without sin, that so he might succour those that are tempted: So his Servants, many of them are much tempted, which may breed in them a sympathy of affection to others that are in such a condition.

2. God will have it so, that Ministers may have the more experience of the truths they preach to others concerning an afflicted condition: those that have had no sickness or other affliction, cannot preach from experience of such truths that concern such a condition; they cannot preach so feelingly and savoury as others; when they have been under affliction, they will know what affliction is, both in the nature of it, and the comforts of it, and God's gracious assistance therein: and so they may speak comfortably, and be enabled

to

to comfort others, as the Apostle *Paul* speaks.

3. God is pleased so to order it sometimes for their humiliation, to keep them low, that so they may not be lifted up by reason of extraordinary manifestations and impartments; thus *St. Paul* had given him a thorn in the flesh, that Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12. 7. A thorn was given him, &c. ('tis twice repeated, both in the beginning and end of the verse) that so this thorn in the flesh might keep out pride in the heart, that so they may have a more low, meek, and humble frame of spirit, and thereby fitted and prepared for greater services. And

4. That they may be also more conformable to those they have to deal with. *Israel* desires *Moses* to speak to them (not God) why? because he was like unto them, and would therefore compassionate them; from whom they therefore desired to receive the commands of God. Thus it pleaseth God to deal with his servants, that as they may pity those they have to deal with, so likewise to draw the affections of their people unto them, to make them more loving, and the more to attend on their Ministry, seeing they are so fleeting, and going away it pleased God that *Epaphroditus* should be sick even to death, to endear the *Philippians* more to him, chap. 2. 25, 28. that their love and tenderness may be drawn forth the more by the discovery of his frailty: Let us improve this.

Use 1. First, as to Ministers, see how the condition is with us in our Calling; We are *Earthen Vessels*,

sels, taken out of dust; We should often consider our frailty to make us more humble, more meek, and more compassionate to others, more diligent in doing good, that we may make amends for our frailty & natural weakneses that are upon us: We must not think much of it, it being no more then in former times; it was the condition of the Apostles themselves; they were *Earthen Vessels*, they had such weakneses upon them, men subject to the like passions as we.

Use 2. Secondly, as for the people, this they may improve in all the notions and considerations of an Earthen Vessel.

First, in regard of the meanness; you must not esteem the Gospel according to the vessel, according to the disparagement of the vessel; a Vessel of dishonour in respect of its matter, may be a vessel of honour in regard of the gold that is in it; those Members, of the body that are weak, and in themselves less honorable, we afford a great deal of honour upon them, in decking and cloathing them: So the Ministers work and imployment, and the Doctrines they bring, are excellent and of great use; when all is done, we have that we serve for; according to the imployment we are put to, we are honorable, though outwardly mean; wicked and base men are called *filij terre*, they are sons of the earth, Job 30.8. *Children of fools, yea children of base men; they are viler than the earth.* i. e. Men of no account (as one saith) the earth groans under such ungracious persons; but gracious persons are vessels of honour; as it was said of the giants of old, so it may be said of these, *they are men of renown* and

and so we should esteem of them. Worldly men look at the outside, and so esteem them: so was Christ dealt with, *Is not this the Carpenters son?* So those Teachers in Corinth, endeavoured to render St. Paul his presence weak, and his speech contemptible, 2 Cor. 10, 11. that so they might make his Ministry contemptible also. But this glorious treasure is in Earthen vessels: *You know, (saith St. Paul) Gal. 4. 13. that through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at first.* This was their commendation v. 14. *But my temptation which was in my flesh, you despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an Angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

All his weaknesses, and whatever was matter of discouragement, they did not despise, but honourably entertained him even as Christ himself. So it was the commendation of the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Theff. 2. 13. that they received not the word as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God,* looking to the mighty God to make it effectual: so should all others do upon this consideration.

2. Seeing Ministers are earthen Vessels in regard of moral infirmities which adhere to them: in respect of their corruptions and weaknesses judge of them as men: but esteem of what is righteous in them: though they have great advantages against sin, and be very careful against sin; yet notwithstanding they are not totally exempted and freed from sin: as they are Ministers, so they are men.

3. In regard that Ministers are earthen Vessels in respect of their frailty. Seeing then they are so frail and transitory, therefore accordingly you

should make use of them, deal kindly and affectionately with them, in that they are quickly broken. What is sooner broken then a Glass or an earthen Vessel? Ministers are quickly taken away, and therefore you should be tender of them while you have them. Where are all the Fathers, *Do the Prophets live for ever?* the word of the Lord indeed indureth for ever, but the Preacher of it doth not; the Gospel is eternal, but the Dispenser is mortal; the Calling is lasting, but the Minister is transitory; and therefore you should carry your selves with all tenderness and respect to them: take heed of grieving their spirits, seeing they are so soon broken. Endeavour also to improve by them, and to get as much good as you can by them. It is a great argument *to work while it is day, because the night comes when no man can work*: whilst God affords means and opportunities, make use of them: we are but passengers: therefore this is a great ground for you to endeavor to get all the good you can by your Ministers, seeing they are frail.

Lastly, By way of improvement: Take notice of the ways of God as different from mans; God puts excellent treasure into *Earthen Vessels*; we keep treasures in strong holds, in the strongest Repositories. God's ways are not as our ways, he goes another way then we do; he makes use of the poorest, meanest, and most frail creatures sometimes; he lays aside many times men of greater abilities, parts and quality, and makes use of weaker to do this great Work. *Chrysostome* makes an expostulation, *If it be excellent treasure,*
why

why in *earthen Vessels*? Therefore it is a Vessel of Earth, because an excellent Treasure. Thus Gods ways are unsearchable. This is the improvement.

Now besides this interpretation given of it, there is another that will not be impertinent. Some understand by *Earthen Vessels*, the expressions, words and phrases of the Ministry, through which the Doctrins and truths of the Gospel are conveyed; this is agreeable to what went before: Some false Teachers in *Corinth* pleased themselves with eloquent and enticing words of worldly wisdom, and so endeavoured to render *Pauls* preaching despicable, in regard of the plainness of it: therefore (saith the Apostle) we have this treasure in earthen Vessels, *b.e.* familiar conveyances, that so we may easily understand it.

Thus I have explained this Earthen Vessel, and so have done with the first considerable part. *viz.* the dispensation it self, *This Treasure we have in Earthen Vessels*: I come now to the second, *viz.*

II. The account of this Dispensation, *That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* Which words may be considered two ways.

1. Either absolutely, as lying in themselves.
Or,

2. Connexively, to the words before going.

1. Take them absolutely as they lie in themselves, and two things are exhibited.

214 *Mr. Nalton's Funeral Sermon.*

1. The excellency of the Gospel and Ministry it self, called Power.

2. The Author and Original of it, laid down two ways, positively, of God: and negatively, not of us.

1. The excellency of the Gospel and Ministry thereof, called Power: There is a great deal of power and efficacy in the Gospel, 'tis in its nature powerful and efficacious: so the Ministry of it, *Rom. 1. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. See 1 Cor. 2. 4. Paul's preaching was in the demonstration of the Spirit and Power, &c.* 'Tis called the Arm of God's Power, the Sword of the Spirit, *Eph. 6. 17. 'Tis quick and powerful, and sharper then any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, &c. Heb. 4. 12.* and many other places. We may conceive it to be so according to the various effects and consequences of it, viz. as to.

1. Conviction.

2. Conversion.

3. Contemperation.

1. 'Tis powerful in regard of conviction, 'tis a word of conviction: and one part of the Work of the Ministry is (by the Spirits co-operation) to convince the world of sin, to open mens eyes, to shew them the vileness of their ways, to discover such courses to be sinful; the Conscience is awakened

ned by the Spirit in the Ministry of the Word, herein 'tis powerful and efficacious : There are divers instances in Scripture, how powerful the Word hath been in point of conviction : in *Felix*, the Apostle *Paul* preached to him of *righteousness and judgement to come, &c.* He tremble : The Judge on the Bench trembleth at the Word delivered by the Prisoner at the Bar : So powerful is the Ministry of the Word, as to discover our sinfulness. So the Disciples going to *Emaus*, their hearts burnt within them, when our Saviour opened to them the *Prophecs*, &c. So it was with *St. Peters* Auditors, *Acts* 2. they were pricked in the heart when they heard *this* : he did preach to them in the *power and demonstration of the Spirit*, and plainly discovered that sin that they were more especially guilty of, and when they heard *that*, they *they were pricked in the heart, &c.*

2. It is a word of Conversion also : Conviction is one thing, and Conversion is another. Sometimes men may be convinced, but yet have no change wrought in them : therefore conversion is another work, it is a turning men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, &c. to receive an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Herein is the Word powerful, viz. in regeneration : I have begotten you (by the Word) to a lively hope, &c. of his own will hath he begotten you, &c.

3. It is a word of comfort and consolation, it is a powerful word, and able to comfort the heart:

and the Ministry is very effectual herein (when set on by the Spirit) to quiet, satisfy, and pacify the consciences of men, which declareth the remission of sin: and whosoever sins are forgiven, must needs be comforted. Indeed it is not in the power of men to forgive sins, yet they can speak a word of comfort in season, by the administration of the promises, (the Spirit of God going along with them) and then they are not only declarative, but operative. Where (I say) it pleaseth God to bless and sanctify the Word, it is effectual for the quieting of the mind, for pacifying of the conscience, and settling of the troubled soul. Thus you see how powerful the Ministry is: and seeing it is so, this should teach us how to behave our selves under it; it is powerful in it self, and powerful in its dispensation, and hath none of that weaknesse (mentioned before) of the dispenser of it: *I was with you* (saith St. Paul) *in much weakness, and in fear, and in trembling, 1 Cor. 2. 3, 4. and my speech was in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* These may seem to be contradictory: But 'tis answered, the Word is powerful in the demonstration of the Spirit, though delivered by one of humane weaknesse, as before is declared. This spiritual power we should look at, and labour after; which power doth not consist in matter of elocution, *tho' enticing words of mans wisdom*, nor in matter of voice, which indeed is a good thing, and suitable to the nature of the matter: a quick and powerful delivery is of great efficacy and power, for the setting home of truths. Yet this doth not make a powerful Ministry, for a whisper in

I
stry
sing
hon
all:

in the ear, may cause a thunderbolt in the conscience: the power lies first in the nature of the matter; the matter consists in the nature and condition of mankind, the certainty of judgement, the necessity of Christ, the covenant of Grace, and the graces and privileges thereof, &c. These carry a great deal of power and efficacy with them, when they are carefully and frequently dispensed, and Gods spirit going along with them, so they become powerful. for the Ministry consists not in empty notions and speculations, that will only tickle the fancy, but never reach the conscience. Moral discourses, though they be of great use, yet if we rest in them, they leave us as they found us. Evangelical truths (which are manifold) are to be delivered in the Ministry. Now as the matter of the Ministry must be powerful, so the expressions must be powerful: there should be suitableness of expression to the matter, *b. e.* with gravity, sobriety, affection, &c. Strong lines make but weak preaching, and take away the efficacy; but delivering truths in the demonstration of the spirit, and in power, that is most effectual: when we speak feelingly and from our hearts, it comes then (through the blessing of the Lord with it) with power. This is then to learn us of the Ministry, *viz.* 1. Use.

Let us be careful that the matter of our Ministry be powerful, so that the handling and dispensing thereof be powerful, that so it may come home to the conscience: thus we should deal with all: *the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened*

318 *Mr. Nalton's Funeral Sermon.*

fastned by the Masters of Assemblies, &c. Eccl. 12. 11.
So our words should have a force and power in them. This as the Apostle says, is mighty and powerful to the beating down of strong-holds, &c.

Use. 2. Secondly in reference to hearers; seeing the Ministry is powerful, you must then submit your selves to the power of it. Many people are Sermon-proof, & think to stand it out against the power of the Word; but if it comes in power to the conscience, they will not be able to resist it; as it is said of them in the Gospel, they were not able to resist the spirit by which he spake (*viz. Stephen*) And for those that desire the conversion of others, what course should be taken by them for that end? but by good counsel, instruction, prayer and good example, to endeavour to convince them, and more especially to bring them to the Word and administrations thereof, which God hath sanctified for this end.

So much for the excellency of the Gospel, viz *The excellency of the power, &c.* I come to the second.

2. The Author of it, 1. Positively, it is of God. And 2. Negatively, it is *not of us*.

First, Positively, it is of God, and that in all the considerations, in the full extent of it, it is of God. So the Ministerial gifts, the performances of it, and the success of it, are all from God.

First,

First, Ministerial gifts are from God; it is he that makes us able ministers of the New-Testament; there are (saith the Apostle Paul) diversity of gifts: to one is given the Word of wisdom, to another the Word of knowledge by the same Spirit, &c. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. It is God that bestows every good gift.

Secondly, The performance also is from God: his grace concurs and assists therein: the habit and the act are both from him: God gives gifts to men, and he enables them to dispence them. Ministerial employments are not only for general, but particular applications, and so need not only general, but particular assistances: That I might be enabled (saith St Paul) to fulfil the work, &c. the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that my preaching might be fully accomplished.

It is God that makes the work powerful, efficacious and successful: Alas! when we have used our best endeavours, all the success is from him, he must make it effectual: it is said, our Saviour went about doing good, for God was with him, enciining him to the work, and assisting him therein: So he is with all his servants: their gifts, employments, and success thereof, are all of God, not of us.

Obj. But it may be objected, Is all from God, and nothing from us? Are we not said to concur with him? and is not then the power partly ours?

Ans. I answer, No: 'tis of God, and not of us:

we

we are indeed subjects of the Ministry, the Recipients thereof, persons employed in the Work, and therefore are said to be *workers together with God*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. but the power and efficacy thereof is from God alone: *Paul and Apollo* are but Ministers, 'tis *God that giveth the blessing*; 'tis not of us in two respects. 1. 'Tis not merited by us: 'tis not of our deserving, nor of our procuring: 1. 'Tis not of our deserving; the best and most accomplisht do not merit it: *I received mercy (saith Paul) to be faithful*: he accounted it a mercy to be employed, and to be faithful therein. 2. 'Tis not of our own procuring, we do not obtain it by our own power, as *Peter* said in the recovery of the lame man, *It is not by any power and holiness of ours, that this man is restored, &c.* and so it is not our gifts and industry only, that will make our Ministry powerful: and therefore in this Work let us be looking up to God, and desire him to assist us, as *Moses* said, *If thou goest not, O Lord, up with us, wherefore should we go hence?* so say I, If the presence of God be not with us, what can we do?

And further, when we do partake of any measure of ability, see where we must determinate it: *Not unto us Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the glory*: We must not sacrifice to our own net, nor give the honor to our own industry, but wholly give the praise to God, because the excellency is of God.

2. But in the second place, if you look upon the words

words reflexively, or as having their connexion to the words going before, so they will agree and hold together; and thus you may read them: Therefore is this *Treasure* in *earthen Vessels*, that the excellency of the *Power* may be acknowledg'd to be of *God*, and not of *us*: If it were in Angels, or had we never so strong bodies, yet the excellency of the power of God would not be so clearly seen, as it is now, being laid up in poor, frail Vessels: Here's the power of God, here's the lustre and glory of God most manifested; for so much the more apparently it will be seen to be from God, by how much the weaker the instrument is that is employed by God; therefore if any thing doth act beyond its own power, it must have some forreign power for the producing such and such acts: therefore when we see any great matter done by poor, frail and contemptible persons of earthen vessels, this doth plainly shew the excellency of the power to be of *God*, and not of *men*: therefore look from man to God, it is God that doth these things: we should overlook earthen Vessels, we should (I say) overlook men that are these earthen Vessels, and look to God that makes the ministry powerful in such conveyances as these are.

Furthermore, It may satisfie us of the ministry, in that we are Vessels, viz. men of frailty, &c. we are apt to be discouraged, and to think hardly that we are followed with so many weaknesses; that we have a hard matter, that when we have taken such pains in the work of the ministry, we should

should be thus rewarded: but this should satisfy us, the more weakness in us, the greater honor will come to Christ: *This Treasure we have in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.* The weaker the Vessel, the more honor will redound to Christ.

Furthermore, this may take off the servants of Christ from unwillingness unto those works and performances which God calls them unto, by reason of their weakness: Thus it is when God calls to any work or employment, the servants of God are apt to plead their own inability; *Moses* says he is not eloquent: *Jeremiah* says he is a child: *Jonah* says he is a man of unclean lips: Thus they have their delays, their excuses, whereby they endeavour to discharge themselves from that work that God calls them to, by their own weakness, &c. but God refuses such excuses; for who makes the blind to see, the dumb to speak, but God? It is he that touched *Isaiah's* lips; it is he that said to *Jeremiah*, Do not say thou art a child, for *I have sent thee*, &c. This I say then is a consideration that may encourage Ministers in their Work, that the weaker they are, the more honor & glory will redound to Christ; for he said unto me, (saith the Apostle) *My Grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness*: Not that this is an encouragement or argument for any to take upon them the great work of the Ministry, without sufficient qualifications and abilities: But where there is not that degree of ability as is desired, where there is a true sensibleness of their

their weakness, this may be an encouragement unto them, that God delighteth to shew his power in them, that by how much the more they are weak, so much more honor he will gain. For a conclusion, it comes to this, viz.

• That we lay no stress upon any outward things.

There is no stress or happiness in these outward things; those that seem to be of some concernment, as strength of body, and other outward qualifications that are of remark; yet consider, they are fading and transitory; this should teach us in the enjoyments of outward things, a great deal of humility: Though we are Vessels of gold in regard of the treasure and improvement, yet in regard of our selves we are Vessels of Earth, and so should be in respect of humility. Let us look upon all these things as given to us of God even for this very end, That we may be more serviceable to him and his people.

So I have done with the two general parts of the words, and so with the whole verse, viz. *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Do

Do we begin again to commend our selves? (saith the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 3. 1.) or need we Epistles of commendation to you, or Letters of commendation from you? ye are our Epistle in our hearts, &c. But this is applicable to the present sad occasion now before us.

This reverend and blessed man of God, *Mr. James Nalton*, was a person of great note and eminency among us: one well known in this City, and in this place, where he spent his labour and pains many years. I could give large accounts & testimonies of him (if need were) from my own knowledg of him, having been acquainted with him many years. He was not only a Minister, but the son of a Minister, his birth and education suting together. He lookt upon it not only as an honor, but as an engagement to be careful to walk in those steps set before him, and to continue the work of the Ministry begun by his religious Father. Certainly the Children of godly and holy parents cannot come off so cheap in their carriages as others: they have greater accounts to make, as having greater examples set before them, greater advantages of Prayer, Exhortation, &c. and so greater engagements: this was thought on, and observed by him. And as he was the son of a minister, so when he came to years and was fitted, he took upon him the ministry: as he was one of great abilities, so accordingly he discharged them faithfully and conscientiously. He was a spiritual, powerful, conscientious Preacher, he preached by his Life; for
(as

(as *Erasmus* saith) we should not only love to speak truths, but we should digest truths on our own hearts before we commend them to others, and so they will be the more effectual. He was a man of a very meek, sweet, and humble spirit; a man of great humility and of great meekness in the midst of great abilities, which was a great ornament in him: a man full of tenderness and condescension to others: a man of a very yeilding and melting frame of spirit, soon dissolved into tears. It was the saying of one, that a good man is full of tears: so this good man was full of tears, not affected, but very real, and hearty, drawn from the fullness of his Spirit, as the Apostle *Paul* saith, he served the Lord in much humility and many tears. This was remarkable, that in these times our Reverend Brother was full of tears in delivering his Doctrine, which was suitable to the age we live in, being full of sin and calamity: there is much need of a bewailing spirit to bewail the iniquities and miseries of the times: they that cannot bewail themselves, need the tears of others. He was a man of great integrity, and single-heartedness; in his exhortation he had much of the simplicity of Christ, as the Apostle *Paul* speaks. In reference to the ministry, he had no worldly and base affections, he had no carnal design therein: but his chief design was to bring souls home to Christ, that was his chief business. As the Apostle saith of himself, may also be said of him, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had his conversation

Q

226 *Mr. Nalton's Funeral Sermon.*

conversation in the world, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth, commending himself to every mans conscience in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 4. 2. He was a man that had ability to speak a word in season: he was very compassionate to wounded spirits, he himself having been much afflicted. He was a man much in communion with God, and had much acquaintance with God, and was careful in improvement therein; he was a *Jacob* in wrestling with God, a *Moses* that stood in the gap, an *Elijah* that prayed earnestly: the whole land was the better for such a person, being much with God; he made many addresses to him, and had much holy familiarity with him. And as in his publick performances he was very faithful and beneficial, so in his family and private he was very fruitful and serious. In a word (not to multiply much in this kind, you need it less in this Auditory, but only by way of grateful memorial) there was much of God and Christ in him, and he was a great example to his fellow-servants; there was much of this Treasure (spoken of in the Text) in this earthen Vessels: as in the matter of it, he was one of a Gospel spirit: and in the conveyances of it, he had great abilities for the work of the Ministry, and discharged it with a great deal of success. As he had this treasure in an earthen vessel, so his vessel, his frail body was no disparagement to him, but the advancement of the treasure, in setting forth the power to be of God; his outward man was
much

much weak and worn away, but his inward man was upheld by the grace of God. His first work in the Ministry was in that place where my self have relation to: he was an assistance to my Predecessor (being then past labour) *Mr. Richard Conder*, and performed the word so well, that he was exceedingly beloved of *Mr. Conder*, and well beloved of the Parish, and other places. He left a good impression behind, and I found good effects by the foundation there laid. The Apostle *Paul* indeed desired not to work there where another had laid the foundation, but I thought it a great advantage that the foundation was laid by such a Master-builder. He was called into the Country to *Rugby* in *Warwick-shire* there he continued very fruitful, and did much good. For some occasion he removed, and returned into City, and came into this place, where he continued about 18 or 19 years, discharged the work of the Lord carefully. I need not say much of his carriage in this place, I appeal to your own consciences. I may say of this servant of Christ, as the Apostle *Paul* said of himself, *1 Thess. 2. 10, 11. Ye are his witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably he behaved himself among you, as you know how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children), that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.* Therefore there lies an engagement upon you to walk answerable to the truths he delivered, and to follow his steps, considering the end of his conversation. I

Put up all in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, ch. 4. 9. *Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, Do: and the God of Peace shall be with you.*



F I N I S.

to
vt
in